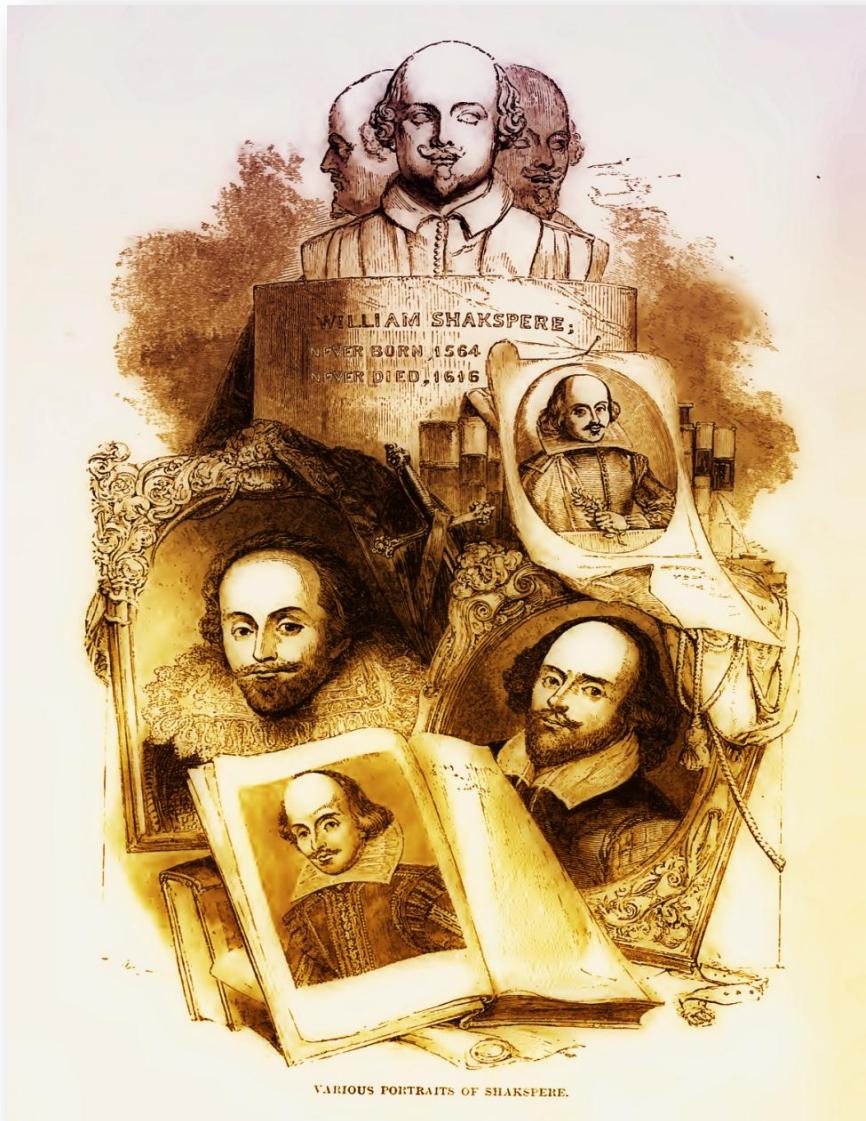


“The biographers must re-write their Lives of Shakespeare.”
— *An Eighteenth Century Critic*

Homeless Shakespeare

His Fabricated Life from Cradle to Grave



By
E. M. Dutton

“The biographers must re-write their Lives of Shakespeare.”

—A Critic

Homeless Shakespeare
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The Idol
By
Dr. Holmes

An idol? Man was born to worship such.
An idol is the image of his thoughts;
Sometimes he carves it out of gleaming stone,
And sometimes moulds it out of glittering gold.
Or rounds it in a mighty frescoed dome,
Or lifts it heavenward in a lofty spire.
Or shapes it in a cunning frame of words.
Or pays his priest to make it, day by day.
For sense must have its god as well as soul.
The time is racked with birth pangs. Every hour
Brings forth some gasping truth; and truth new born
Looks a misshapen and untimely growth;
The terror of the household and its shame,
A monster coiling in its nurse's lap
That some would strangle, some would only starve;
But still it breathes, and passed from hand to hand.
And suckled at a hundred half-clad breasts.
Comes slowly to its stature and its form;
Welcomed by all that curst its hour of birth,
And folded in the same encircling arms
That cast it like a serpent from their hold.

“Be sure and smash the idol, Shakespere, if you can, with the powerful weapons of fact, before you attempt to set up any poetical divinity in his place.”

—John H. Stotsenburg (1904)

“The faults of great authors are generally excellences carried to an excess.”

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)¹

“In sheer despair of ascertaining facts, the majority of biographers have been content to weave a tissue of fictions.”

—C. M. Ingleby (1877)²

“The delusions are based upon prejudice and preconceived ideas, and die very hard.”

—Sir George Greenwood

¹ *Miscellanies*, p. 149.

² *Shakespeare: The Man & the Book* (London: Trubner & Co.) Vol. I.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude for the use of all illustrations set in this work that are now in public domain. This would mean all images chosen is not protected by copyright and may be freely used by everyone, for the explicit reason the work is not protected: A term of copyright has expired.

I express gratitude to my friend, Sergio Verrecchia, for his digital processing on the front-page image. Additional thanks go to the services of the Internet Archive Copyright Agent for their preservation of archives in collaboration with institutions, including the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian; their assistance was indispensable as their material assisted in collecting information from authentic and highly regarded sources. Reprints of material have been quoted with sources indicated. A wide variety of references are listed, and reasonable efforts have been made to collect reliable data.

For convenience, we have followed writing the surname “Shakespeare” for the author of the Shakespeare Canon; thereafter, “Shakespere” in reference to the actor of Stratford-upon-Avon, though spelling of the latter surname in legal documents, remains as given, that upholds the universal rule of quoting original documents as found.

Finally, it gives me pleasure to thank family and friends who have assisted in the creation of this work, and feel indebted to their patience and good judgment.

INTRODUCTION

“When a thing is asserted as a fact, always ask who first reported it, and what means he had of knowing the truth.”

—James Spedding ³

John Ward had noted: “In ancient historic, if we will have anything of truth, we must have something of falsehood; it is as impossible to find antiquity without fables, as an old face without wrinkles.” ⁴ Without knowing it, John Ward could easily have said these same words if he was talking about William Shakespeare.

In Chapter one, we unravel the very first instigators who created the pseudo-biography of Shakespeare: They were a late sixteenth, early seventeenth century clique of men bound by tradition to uphold the name of the British Bard. These men circulated various myths and produced the disinformation of what we know today in order to create a genealogy. The motive for this is dealt with in Chapter four with supporting evidence and references. As researchers of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era, we have encountered many intrigues and machinations; plots and plotters who could organize a plot for as long as two years, which shall have no other importance but to dine with the squire of a neighbouring parish. It was such concepts of life that made all cunning persons superficial ones: The men of this clique we investigate, were no better.

In Chapter two, the most important myths created and shown in chapter one are dispelled with the actual events to take their place. This offers the reader enough evidence to form an opinion of their own if the actor of Stratford is or is not the Shakespeare of literature. We do not cover the subject of the Authorship Controversy, since this is an immense field of pure guesswork by those who support Shakespeare to be Bacon, the Earl of Oxford, Kit Marlowe, and others. There is no possibility of discovering any evidence on the Authorship Controversy (at least for the present), so we did not want the material we were working on to be shadowed with assumptions and/or circumstantial evidence.

In Chapter three it was imperative to give some evidence of the Elizabethan era, their dwellings, their ways of printing, and other such activities of those times. This material helps the reader understand the Elizabethan attitude, in order to comprehend why the life of Shakespeare was fabricated in the seventeenth century with a pseudo-biography.

In Chapter four we offer detailed evidence for the motive of the fabrication, which is the First Folio published in 1623.

In Chapter five, we extend in depth on the forgers of the time, who they were, what their motives were for fabricating Shakespearean material, and what has become of those spurious

³ James Spedding (1808–1881) English author, chiefly known as the editor of the *Works of Francis Bacon*.

⁴ Charles Severn, Diary of the Rev. John Ward (London: Henry Colburn, 1839), 115.

documents. Unfortunately, modern biographers still use these forged documents to create their life of Shakespeare.

In Chapter six, we offer the reader final evidence and proof that the actor of Stratford is not the author of the plays, sonnets, and poems. And, in the Appendices is material that would have disrupted the flow of events in all pre-mentioned chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to William Shakespeare's Biographies

"Of no man has so much that is unreliable been written as about William Shakespeare. He has been painted as a flawless divinity devoid of those traits we attribute to common humanity, and he has been depicted as a slothful drunkard with Falstaffian proclivities."

—Alfred C. Calmour (1894)⁵

William Shakespeare's principal and first biographers are the instigators of what we know today in regards to the Bard's life. The problem with these biographies is twofold. The first, they connect Shakespeare with Stratford in a speculative manner, with no logical consequence; and second, should Shakespeare be the Stratford actor, biographers never once give a direct reference that the man himself stated he was the author of the Shakespearean poems, sonnets, and plays. But to understand this better, an investigation begins with these instigators: Who they were, what was their motive for fabricating such misconceptions to the public, and most importantly, why these myths have not been debunked until now.

Nicholas Rowe was the first to bring to public light a pseudo-biography. We are not cautious on stating "pseudo-biography," and the reader will come to some similar conclusion (if not the same) after reading this book. What we know of Rowe, in regards to his literary career and creation of his *Life* on Shakespeare, follows.

I

Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718)

During the Reign of George the first, Rowe was undersecretary of State and Secretary of State for Scotland. Reaching the object of his ambition, he later became Poet Laureate, though he is chiefly known to literary students as the very first editor of Shakespeare's works, published in 1709, entitled: *Shakespeare's Plays*. Due to an immediate success, the edition ran into a second publication in 1714, a third followed in 1725, and finally a fourth edition came out in 1728. Rowe's editorship to the works resulted in the modernizing of spelling; grammar was punctuated and corrected; the *dramatis personae* (names of all the actors) was made out in lists; verses were arranged, and a number of emendations were made in difficult places of the plays. Furthermore, exits and entrances were added, which in earlier prints had only been inserted occasionally. Last, Rowe completed the division of the plays into acts and scenes by following the Third and Fourth Folios in reprinting the spurious plays. The Shakespeare

⁵ Fact and Fiction about Shakespeare (London: George Boyden).

poems were not included in Rowe's work, though they were published separately by him in 1715, from the 1640 Shakespeare edition.⁶



Figure 1: Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718)

In Rowe's first edition of 1709, a sketch portrait (allegedly being of the Bard) was inserted; it was engraved by Pierre Fourdrinièr. (See Figure 11) This was the first time the working class was introduced to the Bard's face, for the simple reason that the First Folio of 1623 that contained an alleged sketch of the Bard, was no longer in circulation. But, if anyone had a chance to notice the sketch in the First Folio (1623), they would have been surprised to see the difference which Rowe was presenting in 1709. We investigate the engraver, Pierre Fourdrinièr, further down in this chapter. (See Section II. Sir Sydney Lee (1859–1926). For now, we will just point out again that Rowe's sketch of Shakespeare is entirely different from the Folio sketch.

In addition to this peculiarity, a brief biography, entitled: *Some Account of the Life of Mr William Shakespeare* was given in Rowe's work, where he expressed his obligation to an actor called Thomas Betterton (1635–1710) from “whom the greater parts of the incidents were

⁶ W. H. Durham, An Introduction to Shakespeare (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910).

obtained to create the biography.” Rowe said: “For the memory of Shakespeare, having engaged him [Betterton] to make a journey into Warwickshire, on purpose to gather up what remains he could, of a name for which he had so great a veneration.”

Though Rowe appears to have “engaged” Betterton to take a trip to Warwickshire, there is doubt if Betterton had taken such a journey. Speculation even exists if Betterton was reporting from personal research, or from pure hearsay, which was the typical traditional stories Shakespeare’s biographers cling to, even today.



Figure 2: Thomas Betterton (1635–1710)

Mr. J. T. Foard was the author of a work entitled, *English Shakespeareana*; a work where Foard mentioned Betterton never took any journey into Warwickshire: “Bowman, the actor, who lived with Betterton, having married his daughter, Miss Watson, denied that Betterton ever visited Stratford; or in the precise words of the antiquarian Oldys, a truthful man, ‘he (Bowman) was unwilling to allow that his lifelong associate and friend (Betterton) had ever

undertaken such a journey.’ It is disputed on the best authority available at the time that Betterton never went to Warwickshire.”⁷

In need to substantiate Foard’s doubts (if Betterton ever went to Warwickshire), the investigation turned to John Bowman (actor) and William Oldys (antiquarian) who were reporting Betterton never went to Stratford. Before we look at Bowman and Oldys, a short pedigree of Thomas Betterton will be added. Coming of age, he was sent as an apprentice to a bookseller, though we have no record to which, only his saying to Alexander Pope (1688–1744) that he was apprenticed to John Holden; if true, this would surmise his continuation in the employment of the publisher Gondibert, where Betterton’s acquaintance began with an extraordinary exaggerator of tales, Sir William D’Avenant (1606–1668), of whom we will come to know.

John Bowman died in 1739 and was known as a contemporary actor. His wife was the daughter of Sir Francis Watson who joined Betterton in an adventure to the East Indies. This fact had been concealed by the writer of Betterton’s *Life*, in the “Biographia Britannica.” We have not been able to discover why, however, this adventure to the East Indies suffered Betterton to lose above £2,000 and his father-in-law (Sir Francis Watson) lost his entire fortune. On Sir Watson’s death, soon after the year 1692, Betterton took Sir Watson’s daughter under his protection, educated her, and then became her husband. It was from this period onwards that Bowman began a friendly correspondence with Betterton, and remains a solid source in knowing if the latter went to Warwickshire or not.

Turning to William Oldys (1696–1761) he was a zealous inquirer on many subjects, a meritorious contributor to biography and bibliography. As an active note writer in books of status, his notes have been known to have been written “on slips of paper, which he afterwards classified and put in small bags suspended about his room.”⁸ Oldys had also been a librarian to the Earl of Oxford, and in 1755 was appointed Norroy King-at-Arms.

We found a reference from John Taylor, who was the son of one of Oldys’s intimate friends, informing us: “Mr. Oldys was, I understood, the natural son of a gentleman named Harris, who lived in a respectable style in Kensington Square. How he came to adopt the name of Oldys, or where he received his education, I never heard.”⁹

⁷ Foard’s statement was reprinted in the journal “Manchester Quarterly” (January 1898).

⁸ James Yeowell, *Memoir of William Oldys* (London: Spottiswoode, 1862), 37.

⁹ *Records of my Life* (1832), Vol. I. 26. Oldys being known as Harris among his friends, was peculiar, because all the biographers of Oldys that were investigated, speak of him as the natural son of a Dr. William Oldys, who was Chancellor of Lincoln from 1683 till his death in 1708, Commissary of St. Catharine’s, Official of St. Albans.



Figure 3: William Oldys (1696–1761)

Edmond Malone (1741–1812) was a Shakespearean scholar. It is well known that he possessed some knowledge of paleography, which was a science essentially necessary in the investigation of contracted records of the sixteenth century, especially of those written in Latin. This knowledge would no doubt assist Malone in his investigation of detecting Parish-Registers and various documents of the Elizabethan era, to which he added in his biography of the Bard, and will be discussed in a later area. We only add Malone so early, because he differed much on the “authority” of Oldys as we see from his following comment:

“This assertion of Mr. Oldys appears to me altogether unworthy of credit, not that I believe he meant to deceive, but he certainly must have misapprehended Bowman. Why any doubt should be insinuated, or entertained, concerning Betterton’s having visited Stratford, after Rowe’s positive assertion that he did so, it is not easy to conceive. Rowe did not go there himself; and how could he have collected the few circumstances relative to Shakespere and his family, which he has told, if he had not obtained information from

some friend, who examined the Register of the parish of Stratford, and made personal inquiries on the subject?"¹⁰

Malone's critical suggestion does little to add to the exact reasons why Oldys thought Betterton never went to Warwickshire. But it gives us a vital clue toward Rowe's attitude in writing his biography of Shakespeare: Rowe never went to Stratford to investigate any Registers or documents. He preferred to rely upon the gossip of many.

The registers of Stratford, that Malone states, must be dealt on for a while before continuing. These registers are inserted in a tall, narrow book, of considerable thickness, with the leaves formed of very fine vellum. This one book contains the entries of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials of Stratford, which commence with the record of a baptism on March 25, 1558 and ends with an entry of September 14, 1600. What has not been stated before, and it ought to have been stated by Malone who investigated these documents back in the seventeenth century, is how the entries, whether of Baptisms, Marriages, or Burials, are all, without exception, in the same handwriting, from the very first entry of March 25, 1558, to the very last of September 14, 1600.

With this discovery, anyone may ask, Are these registers original, since they are written in the same handwriting over a period of forty-two years? Charles Knight was an author and has published many of his Shakespearean works; he thought the registers were authentic. He does however hint of the peculiarity which Malone concealed: "But, although the register is thus only a transcript for forty-two years, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity and perfect correctness."¹¹ Knight did not specify his reasons in thinking the register authentic. Should the Stratford Parish-Register prove to be a forgery, and there is suspicion it is a forgery, then this would have the actor of Stratford (Shakespere) hanging from a very thin thread. Nowhere have we found a similar instance, where Parish-Registers are entered with the same handwriting over a period of forty-two years. It is inconceivable to believe these registers were not tampered with.

We needed to turn the investigation to the year 1869 when Charles Knight (previously mentioned) published his biography on Shakespeare; an edition where Knight gives a brief statement on Betterton, and springs forth a theory how Betterton "did not make this journey into Warwickshire until after his retirement from the theatre."¹² Had he set about these enquiries earlier, there can be little doubt that the *Life* by Rowe would have contained more precise and satisfactory information, if not fewer idle tales."¹³ Knight's interpretation is somewhat misleading again; it does not tell us if Betterton actually went to Warwickshire, and such hypothesizing creates further misconceptions without discovering the truth. Another author, Richard G. White, believed Betterton definitely traveled to Warwickshire after 1670, though he does not specify when, nor gives corroboration or a source for his beliefs.¹⁴ Robert

¹⁰ Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: Rivington, 1821), Vol. II. 120.

¹¹ Biography of William Shakspere (London: Virtue & Co., Limited, 1873), 172.

¹² The actor retired from the stage in the 1700's.

¹³ William Shakespeare: A Biography (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1865), 280.

¹⁴ Memoirs (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1865).

Lowe, Betterton's official biographer, makes no mention if the latter went to Warwickshire,¹⁵ nor does another biographer (*Life & Times of Thomas Betterton*) published in 1888.

At this point, it is a matter of who to support if Betterton ever set to Warwickshire or not. Two biographers are silent on the matter, though many Shakespearean biographers are in favour of the journey. For the sake of argument, if we lean toward the silent biographers, then a question would be, if Betterton did not travel to Warwickshire, where did he get his information to feed Rowe's biography of Shakespeare? One source would definitely be John Aubrey (1626–1697) the “industrious antiquarian” as he was called, who corresponded frequently with Betterton, though we neither know if Aubrey himself ever went to Warwickshire. Joseph Gray (author) had his doubts.

“There is no authentic record of the visits of Aubrey and Betterton to Stratford. The date at which Aubrey’s visit was made is supposed, by Halliwell-Phillipps (Shakespeare scholar) to have been about the year 1662. In a letter to Anthony à Wood, dated June 15, 1680, Aubrey says: ‘I have according to your desire put in writing these Minutes of Lives. ‘Tis a task that I never thought to have undertaken till you imposed it upon me, saying that I was fit for it.’”¹⁶

The letter which Aubrey wrote to Anthony à Wood (1632–1695) in 1680, referring to the “Minutes of Lives” he had collected, were not about Shakespere as suggested by Joseph Gray; they were minutes written by William Camden (1551–1623) regarding King James I. In 1679, the antiquary Sir William Dugdale (1605–1686) was in correspondence with Aubrey and Wood regarding these minutes. Two extracts of letters follow to support this fact.

William Dugdale to Anthony à Wood
November 25, 1679¹⁷

My copy of those Annals of King James, written by William Camden, is bound up with some other things, which I cannot part with. Your friend Aubrey may easily, I presume, gain a copy from the original in Trinity College Library in Cambridge.

John Aubrey to Anthony à Wood
1679¹⁸

Sir William Dugdale tells me that he hath Minutes of King James’s life to a month and a day, written by Mr. Wm Camden, as also his own life, according to years and days, which is very brief, but two sheets; Mr. Camden’s own handwriting. Sir William Dugdale had it from Hacket, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, who did filch it from Mr. Camden, as he lay a dying. Quære Mr. Ashmole to retrieve and look out for Mr. Camden’s Minutes (memorandums) of King James I, from his entrance into England, which Dr. Thorndyke filched from him as he lay a dying. ‘Tis not above six or eight sheets of paper, as I

¹⁵ Thomas Betterton (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1891).

¹⁶ Shakespeare’s Marriage (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905).

¹⁷ Bodleian Library. Ballard’s MSS. Vol. XIV.

¹⁸ Bodleian Library. Vol. II. Part I.

remember. Dr. Thorndyke told Sir William Dugdale so, who told me of it. Those memories were continued within a fortnight of his death.



Figure 4: John Aubrey (1626–1697)

John Aubrey published his *Lives* in 1680. The work was put together by Aubrey himself. In his biography of Shakespeare, he tells how the man was born in Stratford, and was the son of a butcher, was naturally inclined to poetry and acting, “and did act exceedingly well; he began early to make essays at dramatic poetry, which at that time was very low, and his plays took well.” Aubrey certainly does not bear a high reputation for accuracy or of being trustworthy, for in his biography of Ben Jonson (1572–1637) he says that Rare Ben (as he was known) killed the poet Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593). If the official verdict of Marlowe’s assassin be Frazer, then where Aubrey was creating his assumption that Marlowe was killed by Ben Jonson, is beyond investigating in this work. Moreover, Ralph Bathurst, who was President of Trinity and Vice-Chancellor of the University in Cambridge, was a friend of Aubrey’s who misinformed him that Ben Jonson was from Warwickshire.¹⁹

¹⁹ Anthony Powell, John Aubrey and his Friends (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1948).

In commenting upon *Aubrey's Lives*, Andrew Clark writes: "Their value lies not in the statement of bibliographical or other facts, but in their remarkably vivid personal touches, in what Aubrey had seen himself and what his friends had told him."

Halliwell-Phillipps, who we met earlier, through Joseph Gray's comment above, had devoted a month at Stratford to the minutest collation of the important papers there;²⁰ he calls Aubrey "one of those foolish and detestable gossips who record everything that they hear or misinterpret. He must have been in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes of conversations, or, no doubt in many instances, from his own recollections of them. It would, therefore, be hazardous as a rule to depend upon his statements in the absence of corroborative evidence." And elsewhere: "The only safe plan of dealing with a writer of this mischievous class is to read, be amused, then examine his inconsistencies, and believe nothing. Aubrey's narrative must be considered as exhibiting very indistinctly and imperfectly the floating Shakespearian traditions of his time, and little more."²¹

Coming from Sir Sydney Lee whose biography on Shakespeare will be dealt with in a separate part, we hear from Lee that Aubrey, "in his gossiping *Lives*, based his ampler information on reports communicated by an aged actor, William Beeston [or Bieston, d.1682], whom John Dryden (1631–1700)²² called 'the chronicle of the stage,' and who was doubtless in the main a trustworthy witness. Beeston's father (Christopher) was a member of Shakespeare's Company of actors, and he for a long period was himself connected with the stage. Beeston's friend, John Lacy an actor of the Restoration, also supplied Aubrey with further information."

As to the identity of this actor called Beeston, who was also supplying Aubrey with stories, Samuel Neil writes: "In 1680, Aubrey forwarded his *Minutes of Lives* to Anthony à Wood. He was then in his fifty-fifth year. In 1639, a William Bieston, gent., was governor of the King's and Queen's young company of players, at the Cock-pit, in Drury Lane. This Bieston might have known the 'traditions' regarding Shakespere well, and might have met Aubrey. Was this the man? There were several Beestons connected with the theatres. In a dateless, rough draught in the Chapter House, among other persons, Christopher Beeston and Robert Beeston, 'servauntes unto our (James's) dearest wife the Queen Anna, with the rest of their associates,' are licensed to show and exercise publicly 'the art and faculty of playing comedies,' &c., at 'the Curtain and the Bores Head,' and elsewhere."²³

In order to understand the web which Aubrey, Dugdale, and Wood had created to supply each other with events (true or false) on Shakespeare, it is important to go back when Wood met Aubrey in 1667 in Oxford, though the former knew Wood's brother prior to this year. Wood has been characterized as "an uneasy, bad-tempered man," and though he was six years younger than Aubrey, a partnership formed solid over the years, where they began lending each other manuscripts and documents over periodical consultations on antiquity and other

²⁰ Curiosities of Modern Shakespearian Criticism (London: John Russell Smith, 1853), 7.

²¹ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

²² John Dryden is now scarcely remembered as a dramatic writer. As a poet he holds a very different position in our esteem, yet as a satirist, he is unsurpassed.

²³ Shakespere (London: Houlston & Wright, 1861).

subjects. “It is almost incredible to see from Anthony’s papers (which I have also often heard said) what pains Mr. Aubrey took to get Anthony intelligence, which Anthony used to acknowledge in company, saying that he (Mr. Aubrey) would go over fire and water to serve him, and yet, for all that, at last Anthony despised him, as I have spoken several times.” When Hearne wrote this, it was on July 4, 1724, a time when Aubrey and Wood’s partnership had already taken a downfall, which initiated in August 1692, and is partially described by Aubrey himself in a letter to Wood: “Accidentally I spoke with Mr. Gadbury who is extremely incest against you. He tells me what you have wrote, and I am sorry for it, for he was civil to you and was a very ingenious loyal person. He says that you have printed lies concerning him, and he wonders that you should meddle with him, having never been of the University.” This referred to the short biography of Wood’s on John Gadbury.²⁴ As a consequence, Wood was summoned to the Vice-Chancellor’s Court on November 16, 1692. Most probably, Aubrey’s communications to Wood on Gadbury were somehow misleading, and were misunderstood by Wood, who considered Aubrey largely to blame for his troubles; the material was sent to him by Aubrey for general editing, full of personal comments which might be written in a letter and not necessarily intended for publication.

As a last reference to Aubrey’s “authority,” it can be found in a tabloid of December 1793 (“European Magazine”): “Aubrey, in short, was a dupe to every wag who chose to practice on his credulity; and would most certainly have believed the person who should have told him Shakespeare himself was a natural son of Queen Elizabeth.”²⁵

The reader decides at this point, if Aubrey’s comments and statements should be believed whilst we move on to an additional candidate of gossipers, who would be John Lacy (1615?–1681). Lacy became an apprentice of John Ogilby, when the latter was functioning as what was then called a “dancing master” roughly the equivalent of a modern dance teacher and choreographer. Lacy’s stage career began by 1639 when he was a member of Beeston’s Boys, a troupe formed in early 1637 under a royal warrant when Christopher Beeston was theatre manager and impresario. It was a time of disorder and reorganization in the theatre profession, since London playhouses had been closed in the summer of 1636 due to the bubonic plague.²⁶

It is already clear that Thomas Betterton’s tales “with a mass of similar rubbish,” Mansfield Ingleby remarked,²⁷ were being “communicated” to him by John Aubrey whose reporter was William Beeston, whose reporter was John Lacy. These communications were then passed on to Rowe. This chain of disinformation did not end there. Additional sources were feeding Betterton: Two actors John Lowin (1576–1659) and Joseph Taylor (d.1652),²⁸ and of course Sir William D’Avenant who knew Aubrey, as Frederick Madden (Keeper of manuscripts at the

²⁴ It can be found in Wood’s *Athenæ*, under the subtitle of “Sir George Wharton’s biography, an astrologer and Royalist Captain of Horse.”

²⁵ Queen Elizabeth I was born in 1533; her Reign began in 1558 to 1603 when she died.

²⁶ J. Maidment and W. H. Logan, *The Dramatic Works of John Lacy* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1875).

²⁷ Shakespeare: the Man & the Book (London: Trübner & Co., 1877), Vol. I.

²⁸ Both actors became leaders of the King’s Men after the deaths of Henry Condell and John Heminge (editors of the First Folio).

British Museum in 1916) tells us: "Rowe received his stories from Betterton, who had it directly from William D'Avenant." ²⁹ And there was another possible tell-teller to mention before closing this subject.

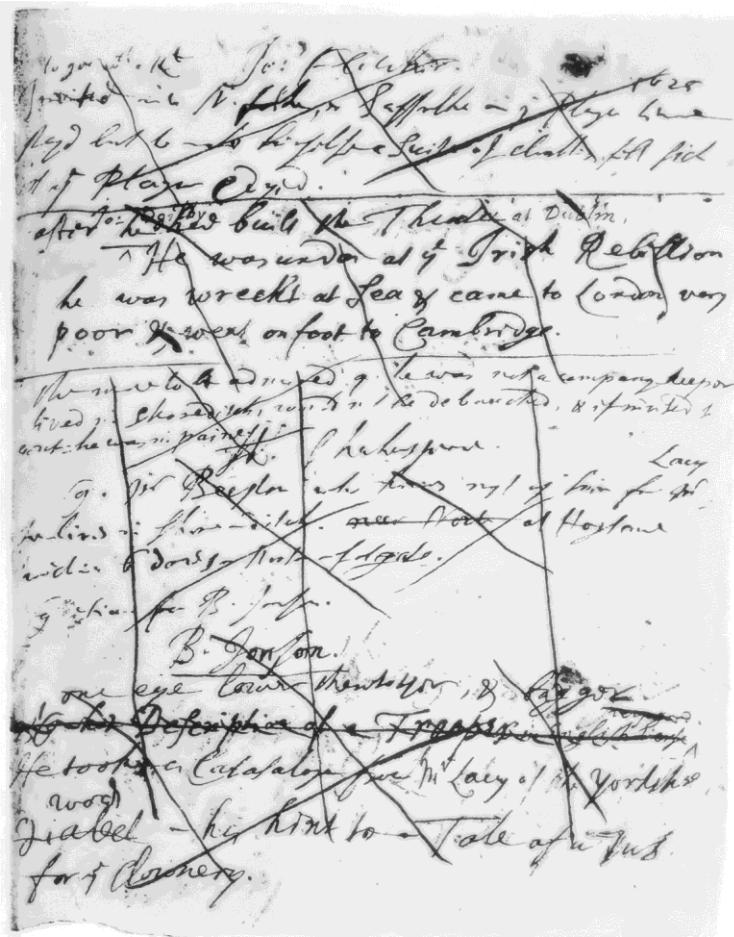


Figure 5: Additional passage about Shakespeare by John Aubrey

Sir Sydney Lee, as editor in his *Dictionary of National Biography*, writes, regarding Sir Fulke Greville (1554–1628):³⁰ “His position in Warwickshire was very powerful, and among the smaller offices he is said to have held there was that of recorder of Stratford. His name frequently appears in the town records. Greville befriended William D’Avenant, and had him as a Page in his service being also his patron.”³¹ If D’Avenant was also receiving his information for his tales from Greville, that would later also feed Rowe’s biography of Shakespeare through Betterton, is circumstantial; yet the hypothesis of this concept is not

²⁹ Shakespeare & His Fellows (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1916).

³⁰ Born at Beauchamp Court in Warwickshire. From Shrewsbury he passed to Jesus College, Cambridge. With his school friend, Philip Sidney, they visited Heidelberg in 1577. Greville sat in parliament and held various offices under Elizabeth and James. In 1603 he was made a Knight of the Bath, and was bestowed the title of Lord Brooke, in 1620. Greville "was stabbed by an old servant who had found he was not mentioned in his master's last Will & Testament; the man, struck with remorse, then slew himself." (Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature (W. & R. Chambers, Ltd., 1901), Vol. I. 354.

³¹ (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1890).

more improbable than what we have been told, how Shakespeare stole “rabbits and venison,” or that he married “one Hathaway” one day, then married one Whateley the next day.

To conclude, “it is very dangerous to frame hypothesis respecting Shakespeare;” Ingleby warned. “For they are apt to get converted into ‘obscure traditions,’ and may come at last to be regarded as historical facts, the evidence of which has been lost. This happened to the conjecture of Capell (1713–1781) and Waldron that Shakespeare was lame, in order to explain two lines in the sonnets, the meaning of which he had wholly misapprehended.”³²

To show how easy it is to manufacture Shakespeare’s pseudo-biography, take the so-called obscure “tradition” of his lameness just mentioned by Ingleby. In a long and elaborate article, entitled: *Ben Jonson’s Quarrel with Shakespeare*, published in the “North British Review” of July 1870, there appears to have been claims by the writer Richard Simpson, that “there is some obscure tradition of a defect in Shakespeare’s legs, to which he is supposed to allude in the sonnets;” and the writer finds an allusion to this defect in Jonson’s *Poetaster*.³³ But the first writer who makes mention of Shakespeare’s alleged lameness was indeed Capell, as Ingleby stated. Capell even takes the credit for the hypothesis how sonnet 37 has reference to this defect. At the same time, in the United States it was claimed that Shakespeare had a scar over the left eye, to which he alludes to in Sonnet 90, and his ghost allegedly appeared thrice to a Stratford man, exhibiting the newly-made gash on the forehead.³⁴

Charles F. Green (author) had noted: “It is to be regretted that this writer [Rowe] preferred relying on his fertile invention to the trouble of investigating sources of information to which at that time he had access, and which would have enabled him to write a reliable history of Shakespeare’s life.”³⁵ The attempt to track a legend to its source is a wild-goose chase, if anything, as is trying to get to the bottom of Rowe’s insinuation of a Shakespeare/Southampton connection, yet deserves to be mentioned. Frederick Fleay had said: “The inferences usually drawn from the incidents of this time, that Shakespere had constantly held communication with his family, whom he had supported during his theatrical career in London, and that he was, on this occasion, largely indebted to the bounty of Lord Southampton, are mere fancies.”³⁶ All that we can rely upon is the dedications made to Southampton by the author Shakespeare.

The *Venus and Adonis*³⁷ dedication to Southampton Henry, Third Earl (1573–1624) was the second recorded to that nobleman in 1594. Southampton was one of those persons who kept no diaries, wrote no letters, nor signed documents; and few of his correspondents kept his letters. We have no preserved record of Southampton’s baptism, though we know (as with the young Earl of Essex) that Lord Burghley (1520–1598) seems to have taken the boy to his own

³² Shakespeare: the Man & the Book (London: Trübner & Co., 1877), Vol. I.

³³ Notes & Queries, 4th S. VIII, 3, col. 1.

³⁴ Birmingham “Daily Mail” January 9, 1874.

³⁵ Shakespeare’s Crab-Tree. Undated publication.

³⁶ Life and Work of William Shakespeare (London: John C. Nimmo, 1886), 29.

³⁷ The printer of *Venus and Adonis* (Richard Field) had connections with Burghley and to whom he dedicated George Puttenham’s *Arte of English Poesie* in 1589.

home, with only occasional visits allowed to his mother and grandfather. Tracking down the dedications to Southampton, the first came from John Clapham, one of Burghley's secretaries, in 1591, attached to a Latin poem called *Narcissus*. The second dedication was from Shakespeare as mentioned, and a third dedication came from Thomas Nashe (1567–1600)³⁸ in 1594 with *The Unfortunate Traveler*, and *Lucrece* from Shakespeare. Beyond what has already been given, nothing more exists regarding a connection to Southampton and Shakespeare; the letters written by the Bard, if any were written, are as completely lost as the manuscripts of his works.

"But it is distinctly proved that Shakspere knew at least Southampton, just in the way the dedications suggest," Stopes (scholar) argues.³⁹ A response would be that the dedications were written from an author called Shakespeare, and if there is any other instance of an actor, in those days, sending a copy of verses, with his love to an Earl, as Stopes and many others support, then those dedications are still wanting. Regardless of Stopes's beliefs, she confesses in writing her *Life of Southampton* (1922) that it did not start "for his [Southampton's] sake, but in the hope that" she "might find more about Shakespeare, which hope has not been satisfied."⁴⁰ No surprise that nothing turned up in regards to a connection between Shakespeare (or Shakspere) and Southampton; any papers, diaries, letters, or legal documents Southampton may have had were confiscated and destroyed when he was captured with the Earl of Essex (1566–1601) in the 1601 rebellion. Yet this fact did not demure Stopes, for she tells us, though her "work strives to be accurate, above all things," she had to use her "imagination to fill up gaps;" a well-known strategy of Shakespeare's biographers. Lee even asserts that Shakspere had "other courtly friends beside Southampton;" but so far as could be discovered, the only nobleman with whom there is a conjecture how the actor came into personal contact with, was the Earl of Rutland to which a brief account of this follows.

A discovery was made of the Steward's Book of the household expenses incurred at Belvoir,⁴¹ by the Earl of Rutland, from August 1612 to August 1613. This discovery was a matter of surprise and disappointment to many biographers, especially to the scholarly Stopes that her "Mr. Shakspere" is discovered in a situation inconsistent with the activities of a poet, "who instead of writing sublimest songs and immortal plays" was engaged with Richard Burbage (or Burbadge d.1619)⁴² working at the Earl of Rutland's new device (*impresa*) for a sum of 44s. "It did not quite fit into the known facts of the poet's career," Stopes said.

³⁸ Th. Nashe: dramatist and pamphleteer. After the death of Robert Greene, when his memory was assailed by Gabriel Harvey and others whom he had offended, his friend Nashe who attempted to defend him, finding it difficult to do so, makes up for the lameness of his defence by the bitterness of his attack on Harvey. Nashe, in fact, resents being regarded as an intimate of Greene's, yet his, and the latter's spiteful and ill-bred reflections upon Shakespeare's social quality, education, and personal appearance, between 1589 and 1592, were received sympathetically by the remainder of the "gentlemen poets," as they styled themselves in contradistinction to the stage poets, and used thereafter for years as a keynote to their own jealous abuse of him.

³⁹ The Bacon-Shakespeare Question (London: T. G. Johnson, 1888), 114.

⁴⁰ Life of Henry, Third Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's Patron (Cambridge: University Press), Preface.

⁴¹ Belvoir Castle stood on the site of a majestic pile, in which Roger Manners, 5th Earl of Rutland, was born on October 6, 1576; the Castle was founded by Robert de Todeni, standard bearer to William I, the Conqueror, who died in 1088.

⁴² Sir Sidney Lee, A Life of William Shakespeare (New York: MacMillan Co., 1909), 33: "The common assumption that Richard Burbage, the chief actor with whom Shakspere was associated, was a native of Stratford is wholly erroneous. Richard was born in Shoreditch, and his father came from Hertfordshire. John Heminge, another of

The Belvoir *impresa*⁴³ of 1613 was about to be used for the first time: Roger, Earl of Rutland, who in company with Southampton, in 1599, “went not to the Court, but only to see plays every day,”⁴⁴ had died, and had been succeeded by his brother Francis, who was now preparing for a Court tournament.

1613: *Item 31 Mortii, to Mr. Shakspeare in gold about my Lord's impreso XLIII JS; [44s.] to Richard Burbage for painting and making it in gold, XLIII JS-LIVII JS. [£4. 8.] Account of Thomas Scriven, the Earl of Rutland's Clerk.*

This said, caution must be noted; there were many Shakespeares dwelling in the boroughs of Warwickshire, and the above-mentioned “Mr. Shakspeare” could have been another than the Stratfordian actor: “It may have been Mr. John Shakespeare, the Prince’s, afterwards the King’s bitmaker;” Stopes reports.⁴⁵

Since Rowe’s *Life* in 1709, additional conjecture has been added to that biography; “documents have been unearthed, leases, wills, and stationers’ registers have been exploited, but within those few octavo pages of Rowe’s are included all of the essential story that will ever be known of the career of William Shakespeare.”⁴⁶ At the close of this initial research, on who the taletellers were for Rowe to manufacture his pseudo-biography, it remains a highly circumstantial fact, if either of these gentlemen ever researched in depth their communications: Sir William Dugdale; Anthony à Wood; Sir William D’Avenant; Sir Fulke Greville (a possible candidate); John Aubrey; William Beeston; Thomas Betterton; John Lacy; John Lowin; and, Joseph Taylor.

After giving the reader the reporters of who furnished Rowe for his biography on Shakespeare, we may now go into depth what Rowe wrote in that biography; and this biography supplies all we know today of the Immortal Bard. The memoir has never been questioned by recent biographers, except from those who wish to portray William Shakespeare as the Earl of Oxford, or as Sir Francis Bacon, or as Christopher Marlowe. They cannot be blamed for wanting to do this.

Rowe’s first edition (1709) entitled, *Shakespeare’s Plays*, came to a bulk of seven volumes and sold for £36. 10s. The first volume opens with *Some Account of the Life of Mr William Shakespeare* from which the following extracts are taken.

Shakspeare’s actor-friends who has also been claimed as a native of Stratford, was beyond reasonable doubt born at Droitwich in Worcestershire. Thomas Greene, popular comic actor at the Red Bull theatre early in the seventeenth century, is conjectured to have belonged to Stratford on no grounds that deserve attention; Shakspeare was in no way associated with him.”

⁴³ An *impresa* was a private and personal device, as distinguished from the family Coat-of-Arms, and was especially used in tournaments and masques when there was some attempt at concealing one’s identity. A Coat-of-Arms told a man’s name as clearly as written or spoken words did, and when used for the first time, would be known only to the intimate personal friends of the wearer.

⁴⁴ Winwood’s *Memorials*.

⁴⁵ Burbage & Shakespeare’s Stage (London: Alexander Moring Ltd., 1913), 109.

⁴⁶ B. Warner, Famous Introductions to Shakespeare’s Plays (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1906), xvi.

Rowe

He was the son of Mr. John Shakespeare, and was born at Stratford, in Warwickshire, in April 1564.

We go into depth on the discrepancies of this birth date later in this work, but can mention here, that at the time what Rowe stated, that Shakespeare was born “in April 1564,” was not from fact, and the editions of Pope coming into print in 1725, of Lewis Theobald (or Tibbald 1688–1744) in 1726, of Sir Thomas Hanmer (1677–1746) in 1744, and of Warburton (1698–1779) in 1747, was not productive of any additional or substantiated information.⁴⁷

Rowe

His family, as appears by the Register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen.

Malone argued with Rowe’s statement on the Shakespere family, that it was extremely inaccurate and erroneous. “From such a representation, it might naturally be supposed, that a long series of ancestors, all denominated gentlemen, might be found in the archives of Stratford.” Malone stated.⁴⁸ We investigated the Arden⁴⁹ family (from Shakespere’s mother’s side) and found it was not, as has been supposed, in very flourishing fortunes.

On May 11, 1599, from the Acts of the Privy Council, an entry for a warrant appears. The date of this warrant is at the time John Shakespere (father of the Stratfordian actor) applied for a grant to impale his wife’s Coat-of-Arms in his own new Coat. The Garter King of Arms (Dethick), reported that John Shakespere was to have had a pattern of his Arms blazoned for him by Clarence Cooke, though he did not bear them till after 1597.⁵⁰

“Warrant to pay to Elizabeth and Mary Arden,⁵¹ daughters of Edward Arden, late convicted of high treason, 40 marks a year each for life, out of revenue assured for life to their mother Mary Arden in lieu of dowry, and come by reason of her offence into her Majesty’s hands. This warrant was directed to the Late Lord Treasurer, Eliz., and is now to pass the Privy Seal, directed to the Exchequer, as there is no warrant there to continue the annuities.”

⁴⁷ See Appendix A.

⁴⁸ Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1821), Vol. II. 18.

⁴⁹ Richard Grant White, Memoirs (Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1865): “The name ‘Ardern,’ which became ‘Arden’ or ‘Wood,’ was given at first to a forest covered tract, which extended from the Avon to the Trent on the north, and the Severn on the west; but it was retained at a very early period by that part only which lay within Warwickshire.”

⁵⁰ Samuel Neil, Shakespere (London: Houlston & Wright, 1861).

⁵¹ Mary Arden (d.1608) mother of the Stratford actor, to which her birth date has not been determined: biographers tell us she was either born in 1540, or in 1557. Of her burial, there is nothing further known of her but what we see in the Stratford Burial Registers: “1608, September 9, Mayry Shaxspere Wydowe.” There is an assumed connection of the Arden family with the Catholic Southampton family from the writings of Eric Sams in his The Real Shakespeare II. Retrieving the Later Years, 1594–1616 (Centro Studi Eric Sams, 2008). He hypothesizes how Mary Arden was the daughter to Edward Arden, and not his first cousin. Edward Arden had been involved in a case of treason in 1583; being a Catholic, his relation was assumed to be with one Mary Brown who by marriage, to the Countess of Southampton, was the mother of Wriothesley.

The Privy Council entry led to an actual account of espionage, traced back to the Arden family from the Stratford town records.⁵² On October 25, 1583, John Somerville, son-in-law to Edward (Shakespere's mother's cousin) and Mary Arden (Shakespere's mother's kinswoman and namesake) left his house which was located six miles north of Stratford for London. He left with the intention of shooting the Queen. He was arrested the next day and taken to Oxford to await hearing at Westminster and was then sent to the Tower. A week later (November 2) the Clerk of the Privy Council (Thomas Wilkes) arrived at Charlecote to "search in the matter" and to act with Sir Thomas Lucy (1532–1600) for the "apprehension" of those implicated in the treasonable act. The next day, Wilkes and Lucy together with Edward Aglionby and Rafe Griffin (who was master of the Leicester Hospital in Warwick), raided Park Hall that was only twenty miles from Charlecote, and took Edward and Mary Arden prisoner. Four days later (November 7) Wilkes wrote from Charlecote to Sir Francis Walsingham (1530–1590) the Elizabethan spymaster: "Unless you can make Somerville, Arden, Hall (the priest), Somerville's wife and his sister, to speak directly to those things which you desire to have discovered, it will not be possible for us here to find out more."⁵³

Henry Rogers was the town clerk of Stratford in 1577, and was at this time operating as a spy to Lucy; he assisted the latter and the Clerk of the Privy Council (Wilkes) in the search for "books and writings of an incriminating nature" in the Arden residence. For his services, Henry Rogers received 6os. at St. James's on November 20, 1583.

Richard Savage, who was secretary and librarian of Shakespeare's Birthplace and Trust, and also deputy keeper of the records of the Corporation of Stratford, had collected a mass bulk of town records. Regarding the espionage venture, he writes: "If Shakespere was in his [Henry Rogers's] employment he may have had a hand in this."⁵⁴ Savage meant Shakespere may have helped in the search for "books and writings of an incriminating nature." It would be a peculiarity why young Shakespere, in 1583, at the age of nineteen, only a year after his alleged marriage to Anne Hathaway, would be in the employment of the Town Clerk, who was also a spy for Lucy. But Savage's point of view was also held by Simpson who had supposed, young Shakespere at the time, had served Edward Arden (his mother's cousin) in the capacity first of a Page, and then in that of a spy, under the assumed name of William Thacker.

We investigated this, and found an article in the "Edinburgh Reviewer" that debunked this theory, as it showed from the State Papers, how William Thacker was a real personage being then a servant to the Somervilles, and "at his own request, that he had served him [Edward Arden] about three years," according to his examination given on December 6, 1583.⁵⁵

Returning to the high treason event, on December 2, 1583, John Somerville together with his in-laws (Edward and Mary Arden), and Hugh Hall (their priest) were indicted at Warwick for high treason. The following indictment is from the secret Spanish pouches that are now available for public viewing.

⁵² Richard Savage, Minutes and Accounts (Dugdale Society, 1924), Vol. X.

⁵³ State Papers Dom. Eliz. clxiii. 54 f.

⁵⁴ Minutes and Accounts (Dugdale Society, 1924), Vol. X.

⁵⁵ State Papers, Dom. Ser. Eliz., clxiii., 72, 21 Nov.

Indictment found at Warwick against the said John Somerville, Margaret Somerville, and the said Edward Arden, late of Park Hall, aforesaid, gentleman, and Mary, his wife, Francis Arden, and the said Hugh Hall for that on the 22nd October, 25 Eliz., at Edreston, they conspired to compass the death of the Queen, and change the pure religion established in the Kingdom, as well as to subvert the Commonwealth, and in order to carry such their treasons into effect, the said Margaret Somerville, Edward Arden, Mary Arden, Francis Arden, and Hugh Hall at Edreston, the 24th Oct., 25 Elizabeth, by divers ways and means incited John Somerville to kill the Queen and thereupon the said John Somerville traiterously said ‘I will go up to the Court and shoot the Queen through with a pistol,’ and on the following day he took a pistol, gunpowder, and bullets, and journeyed therewith from Edreston towards London, the Queen then being in her house called St. James, in the County of Middlesex, near the same city, in order to carry his treasons into effect.

Baga de Secretis, Pouch xlv., mems. 9 and 10

All perpetrators were tried in London on December 16, and found guilty. The Record of the Sessions held at Guildhall on December 16 (before the justices appointed to try the prisoners) records the guilty verdict. “John Somerville, Edward Arden, Mary Arden, and Hugh Hall, being brought to the Bar by the Lieutenant of the Tower, are severally arraigned. John Somerville pleads guilty, Edward Arden, Mary Arden, and Hugh Hall plead not guilty. Venire from the county of Warwick awarded instanter. Verdict guilty. Judgment against the male prisoners and the female prisoner as is usual in cases of high treason. Execution on the 20th.”

Mary Arden was pardoned, but her husband (Edward Arden) was executed at Smithfield on December 20; the previous evening John Somerville was found hanged in Newgate. There is a “secret advertisement from Exeter [that] suggests Somerville was hanged by the Catholics to avoid greater evil,” as is recorded in the State Papers.⁵⁶ The family priest, Hugh Hall (a Catholic), is generally known to have turned informer, and “sacrificed the rest,” as Froude in his *History* reports.⁵⁷ Beyond this assumption, we could find nothing more of Hugh Hall, but discovered that one of John Somerville’s servants, John Purton, was imprisoned in the Marshalsea prison for having told William Somerville that one of the clerks of the Privy Council was searching his brother’s house. “He petitioned Walsingham for release, as he did this in ignorance; and after confession of all he knew, he was pardoned.” Stopes writes.⁵⁸ The examination of Neve, another servant, as to Arden’s papers and communications, brought up no fruitful leads for Popham who was the Attorney-General at the time.

In the State Papers, there is an interesting fact: After the above act of treason, “the family kept quiet during the Reign of Elizabeth; but William [Somerville] was Knighted on July 23, 1603. He was appointed Sheriff of the county in 8 James I.”⁵⁹ William Somerville died in 1616, the same year as Shakespere is alleged to have died. But what is of interest, is that a family member of such a treasonous act, in the Reign of Elizabeth, was later Knighted upon the

⁵⁶ Dom. Ser. Eliz., 168, 24.

⁵⁷ Vol. VI. 609.

⁵⁸ Shakespeare’s Warwickshire Contemporaries (Shakespeare Head Press, 1907).

⁵⁹ State Papers, Dom. Series, Elizabeth, clxiii. 21-23.

enthronement of King James. Many inferences may be weighed and considered, especially for the year 1605, when the alleged Gunpowder Plot had emerged, and we will give more reference to this later on.

At this point we close this treason act with a letter written on April 1, 1584, by the Elizabethan Privy Council to Thomas Bigge, John Harryson, and Henry Dingley, thanking them in “searching the house of Thomas Throgmorton in Coughton Park, where mistress Arden, wife of the traitor Arden that was executed doth dwell at this present. Because it should seem by your letter to Mr. Topcliffe [Elizabethan torturer] there was resistance offered at such time as you did search the house, and that they of the household then did not carry themselves with that dutiful course and obedience they ought to do, and that divers superstitious things and furniture for mass was there found, and it was confessed that a seminary priest was harboured there, who was conveyed out of the way, or lieth hid in some secret place. We have thought good to require you to commit to prison as well mistress Arden as the rest of her servants to be proceeded, according to the qualities of their offences, which we refer to your discretion.”⁶⁰

Now Dr. Nares, in his *Memoirs of Burghley*, enters in the table of contents a subject, entitled: “Case of Arden and his family,”⁶¹ but there is no allusion to the Ardens in the text, “as if it had been cut out,” Stopes complains; and the *Letters and Memorials of Burghley* (edited by Murdin) are silent on the treason act, as is the *Memorials of the Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth*, a political diary of Burghley’s, printed at the end of the volume. “Altogether,” Stopes writes, “the whole affair is so discreditable to all Edward Arden’s judges and the methods of justice of his times that it is almost preferable that they should somehow or other have come to feel ashamed of their action, and try to hide it, probably after the Earl of Leicester’s death.⁶² Every trait in the character of Edward Arden becomes doubly interesting to those who believe in the transmission of family characteristics, and who see in Edward Arden, the so-called traitor, the relative of William Shakespeare.”⁶³

Returning to Rowe’s biography, he further tells us that the actor’s father, “who was a considerable dealer in wool,⁶⁴ had so large a family, ten children in all, that though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment.” The rumour of John Shakespere’s occupation no doubt came down from Thomas Betterton who we met earlier. The assumption was taken as satisfactory by Lee since he mentions the father “set up at Stratford as a trader in all manner of agricultural product; corn, wool, malt, meat, skins, and leather were among the commodities in which he dealt. Documents of a somewhat later date often describe him as a glover.”⁶⁵ Halliwell-Phillipps tells us that tradition, which is a neat way to term myths, regarding John Shakespere’s occupation, was first reported by a Parish Clerk in 1693, and is all we have. The biographer writes: “If the clerk’s story be rejected,

⁶⁰ State Papers, Dom. Ser. Eliz., clxxi., 35.

⁶¹ Vol. III. 183. Chapter X.

⁶² September 4, 1588.

⁶³ Shakespeare’s Warwickshire Contemporaries (Shakespeare Head Press, 1907).

⁶⁴ I. S. Leadam, Domesday of Inclosures 1517–1518 (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1897), Vol. I. 225: “In 1454 Warwickshire wool was priced at 93s. 4d.”

⁶⁵ Illustrated Life, 3.

we must then rely on the account furnished by Betterton, who informs us, through Nicholas Rowe, that John Shakespere was a considerable dealer in wool, and that the great dramatist, after leaving school, was brought up to follow the same occupation, continuing in the business until his departure from Warwickshire."

As to Rowe's statement that the father had "ten children in all" is an imaginative tale, no doubt first concocted by Oldys when he announced that "our poet was the son of Mr. John Shakespeare, woolstapler. Was the eldest of ten children, born April 23, 1563." Malone gives correction to this falsity. "The truth, however, is, that our poet's mother [Mary] never appears to have borne to her husband more than eight children, five of whom only, namely, four sons and one daughter, attained to years of maturity; William, Gilbert, Richard, Edmond, Joan, Margaret, Anne, and an elder Joan, having died in their infancy. Instead, therefore, of being charged with the maintenance of so numerous a family, as ten children, the father of our poet had only half that number for any considerable period to support."⁶⁶

Malone then goes through the baptisms of the correct number of children. Whether these dates are correct, since they are taken from the Parish-Registers (highly suspected as a forgery), we have no way of telling.

Baptisms of the Shakespere Siblings From the Parish-Registers

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. September 15, 1558: | Joan Shakespere, daughter to John Shakespere. |
| 2. December 2, 1562: | Margareta filia Johannes Shakespere. (d.1563) |
| 3. April 26, 1564: | Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakespere. |
| 4. October 13, 1566: | Gilbertus filius Johannis Shakespere. (d.1611) ⁶⁷ |
| 5. April 15, 1569: | Joan the daughter of John Shakespere. (d.1646) |
| 6. September 28, 1571: | Anna filia Magistri Shakespere. (d.1579) |
| 7. March 11, 1573: | Richard son to Mr. John Shakspeer. (d.1612) ⁶⁸ |
| 8. May 3, 1580: | Edmund son to Mr. John Shakespere. (d.1607) |

Rowe also tells us that the actor was educated: "He [the father] had bred him, it is true, for some time at a Free-School, where it is probable he acquired that little Latin he was master of: But the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that

⁶⁶ Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1821), Vol. II. 51.

⁶⁷ Oldys relates that Gilbert survived until after the Restoration of Charles II (1660), which must be a mistake, making him then to be ninety-four years old; and the statement is disproved by the absence of any allusion to him in Shakespere's last Will & Testament. Halliwell-Phillipps writes that in the "Coram Rege Roll of 1597, Gilbert is named as one of those standing bail for a clockmaker of Stratford;" he is described as "Haberdasher of St. Bridget's Parish, London." Stopes, in "The Athenaeum" of December 22, 1900, wrote how she went through the books of the Company of Haberdashers, but found "no trace of the name Shakespeare anywhere and in the sixteenth century, no trace even of a Gilbert, except 'Gilbert Shepherd,' who took up his freedom in 1579. Neither is there any trace of him in the Registers of St. Bridget's or St. Bride's, nor in the Subsidy Rolls, but in both places appear Gilbert Shepherd." She concluded that Halliwell-Phillipps "misread 'Shepherd' as 'Shakespeare.'"

⁶⁸ Richard is assumed to be buried in the churchyard of the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford.

language." We have no direct evidence today of the Stratford actor having attended a "Free-school" in any borough of Warwickshire. Assumption takes centre stage on this subject.

"Shakespeare has given to Warwickshire a worldwide fame, and on this account his life receives much attention." ⁶⁹ And Halliwell-Phillips, in *The Stratford Records* (1887): "However limited may be the value of Shakespearean biography, in the opinion of a large number of the critics, to say nothing of its absolute inutility to the odd people who believe Shakespeare to have been somebody else, there can be no doubt of its being everything to Stratford, a town which, in its absence, would be merely one of our Little Peddingtons. It is, therefore, with infinite amazement that one observes indications, on the part of its present rulers, to place the study of the history of the town on a level with that of the history of the poet." ⁷⁰

It is difficult to disagree, after the intense research done for this work, with what George Hookham was writing: "Every dweller in Stratford is interested in upholding the Stratford tradition. It is doubtful if there is a doubter in Stratford. The vested interests are in an ascending scale. Officials for whom the interest of the town constitutes a duty; authors who have staked their reputation on the issue; Trustees of the Birthplace; (he would be a sanguine man who set out to convince a Trustee of the Birthplace). All these form a standing army whose duty it is to defend the tradition of the town. Vested interests is indeed a mild term. It is a matter of life and death to Stratford. What would become of it, what of the champions of orthodoxy if, perchance, the Shakespeare tradition were destroyed? The belief in it is ingrained. Orthodox writers even go the length of assuring an already prejudiced public that there is no Shakespeare problem; that only in an unbalanced mind could the doubt arise. Unmannerly abuse is poured on the head of a disputant: The weapons, ridicule and contempt and they think they are doing Shakespeare service." ⁷¹

It is of need to correctly give the mannerisms of the town people, as this will justify why so much conjecture remains on the Stratfordian actor, presumably the Bard; for any person with some delicacy toward the matter, would immediately see through these myths and dismiss the Stratford Idol as being the author, William Shakespeare.

David Garrick's description of Stratford at the time of his Jubilee in 1769, was to the effect, the town was "the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched looking town in all Britain." Regardless, the antiquity of the town in its name tells of an English settlement at the *ford* where the roman *street* crossed the river called by the Welsh, the *afon*. ⁷² The word "Avon" is of Celtic origin, meaning "river" and Arden is formed from the Celtic "ard," high or great, and "den" the wooded valley a compound which also supplied Luxemburg with its district of the Ardennes. Place names like these prove the sojourn of Celtic tribes in the north and south of Warwickshire before the Roman Occupation. ⁷³

⁶⁹ William Andrews. *Bygone Warwickshire*. (Birmingham: The Hull Press, 1893).

⁷⁰ London: Harrison & Sons, 1887.

⁷¹ Will O' The Wisp (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1922), viii.

⁷² J. R. Green, *Making of England*, 347.

⁷³ Sir Sidney Lee, *Stratford-on-Avon* (London: Seeley & Co., Ltd., 1904).

An account of the population of the town was taken on April 19, 1765, by George Beauchamp, an ironmonger and one of the town's principal citizens.⁷⁴ The purpose was to ascertain the number of persons who had survived from smallpox. Beauchamp's account showed the inhabitants to be 2,287 and the houses to a number of 552. At this time, the town was under the jurisdiction of one Bailiff called Thomas Gilbert and of fourteen Aldermen whose names are given with their spelling as taken from the town records: Richard Lord, Hugh Reynolds, William Smythe, Thomas Philippes, Thomas Wynfeild, John Jefferies, Thomas Dixon, George Whatley, Henry Biddle, William Whatley, Robert Mors, Robert Pratt, and Adrian Quiney. Finally, the fourteen Burgessesses were John Burbadge, William Mynske, Daniel Phillips, Robert Perrot, Laurence Peynton, Roger Sadler, Humphry Plymley, Richard Harrington, William Smith, Francis Harbadge, George Turnor, Richard Symmonds, John Wheller, and Lewis ap Williams.⁷⁵

In the fourteenth century, two brothers named John and Robert de Stratford, and their nephew Ralph, were the most distinguished people of the town, being Statesmen, holding in turn the Chancellorship of England. To this family the town owes many benefactions: One would be the Chapel for the Guild of the Holy Cross, which was founded by Robert de Stratford, father of these brothers, during the Reign of King Edward I. "Stratford owes all its glory to two of its sons, John, Archbishop of Canterbury, who built a church there; and Hugh Clopton, who built, at his own cost, a bridge of fourteen arches across the Avon."⁷⁶

No doubt English to the core, the men of Stratford ever loved their borough, and have been jealous for its prosperity. In the earlier days of history, generous hearts and willing hands contributed to the borough's improvements. Towards the close of the eleventh century, dwellers probably numbered less than two hundred; the *Domesday Survey* has alluded to only twenty-nine men being each the head of a family.⁷⁷

We hear, during the year 1594, how two dreadful fires occurred in Stratford, totally consuming two hundred houses, taking into cinder and smoke all household goods to the value of "£20,000 and so reduced the inhabitants, that the Corporation petitioned Elizabeth, not only for a remission of certain subsidies and taxes granted in her last parliament, but also to partake of the benefit of rising from £30,000 which had been granted by parliament for the relief of decayed cities and towns: And it appears that the Queen, in consequence, remitted their subsidies, and granted briefs, empowering them to collect contributions from many of the counties and cities in this Kingdom."⁷⁸

On July 10, 1614, a third fire almost destroyed the town, which has Pope writing how two large chests full of Shakespere's loose papers and manuscripts were in the hands of an "ignorant

⁷⁴ Robert Wheller, History and Antiquities of Stratford-on-Avon (Stratford-upon-Avon Press: J. Ward, 1806).

⁷⁵ Incorporated by letters patent, dated June 28, 1553, the 7th year of the Reign of Edward the V.

⁷⁶ Translated from Jean Blaeu (1645).

⁷⁷ The *Domesday Book*, compiled by William the Conqueror, was a Register of English land, and took six years for its meticulous compilation. It still remains in two vellum manuscripts, recording the size of each estate, the quality and use of the land, the name of the owner, and other details. With the aid of this book of reference, William the Conqueror had organized the taxation in the most scientific manner.

⁷⁸ Robert Wheller, History and Antiquities of Stratford-on-Avon (Stratford-upon-Avon Press: J. Ward, 1806).

baker of Warwick;" this baker had married one of the Shakespere descendants, and carelessly scattered about the papers, "to the particular knowledge of the late Sir William Bishop" (1629–1700) till the papers were all consumed in the general fire and the destruction of that town.⁷⁹ Without further evidence for what Pope tells us in regards to the "loose papers and manuscripts" being burnt in 1614, his theory remains conjecture. However, within the same fire, Stopes believed "all [Ben] Jonson's papers burned," and she also wonders if he took Shakespere's papers to London.⁸⁰ Lewis Theobald had stated on these theories:

"I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the authority of tradition, because his [Shakespere's] wife survived him seven years, and, as his favourite daughter Susanna survived her twenty-six years, it is very improbable they should suffer such a treasure to be removed and translated into a remoter branch of the family without a scrutiny first made into the value of it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the authority of the relation; but notwithstanding such an apparent improbability, if we really lost such a treasure, by whatever fatality or caprice of fortune they came into such ignorant and neglected hands, I agree with the relater, the misfortune is wholly irreparable."⁸¹

A fourth fire, in the year 1896, completely destroys shops in Henley Street, "six doors off the little garden on the east side of the birthplace."⁸² However, the author and director of the Center for Renaissance and Baroque Studies, Mr. Schoenbaum, stated how Jordan (the pseudo-historian and forger) mentioned no fire consumed that town after 1614.⁸³

After this brief history of Stratford, it is appropriate to come to Rowe's account again regarding Shakespere's education. It can hardly be clouded over, that the preliminary qualifications for admission in school, at least in the Elizabethan era, was that the child needed to be a residence of the town where the school was located; to have reached the age of seven (since infant school was not in existence in those days), and finally, to be able to read and write in English and in Latin. These three preliminary qualifications have been wavered away by scholars and biographers, though the qualifications were clearly set in the Statutes of law and put upon every Elizabethan child who needed to attend school. The general purpose or aim of the Statutes was to "better regulate and order" the affairs of various schools in England. It is questionable that the actor's parents would have been able to send Shakespere to the Stratford or any other "Free-school" for that matter, unless they tutored him privately. We have no records of his private tutoring, or who the tutor was. Biographers are silent here, and neither mention these preliminary qualifications.

From documented archives, we learn that Shakespere's parents could not write. Thompson's *Shakespeare's England* (1916) also gives us this fact: "Neither of the poet's parents appears to have been able to write at all; they simply made their marks in execution of deeds;"⁸⁴ and this

⁷⁹ Shakespeare, by a Strolling Player (1729), 8vo. 45.

⁸⁰ The Bacon-Shakespeare Question (London: T. G. Johnson, 1888).

⁸¹ Preface to his second edition of Shakespeare's Works (1740), abridged from the first edition of 1733.

⁸² Sir Sidney Lee, *Alleged Vandalism at Stratford-on-Avon* (Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903).

⁸³ Shakespeare's Lives (New York: Oxford Press, 1993), 82.

⁸⁴ Shakespeare's England (1916), Vol. I. 294.

is corroborated by the Shakespearean scholar Lee, in 1915: "When attesting documents he, [John Shakespere] like many of his educated neighbours, made his mark, and there is no unquestioned specimen of his handwriting in Stratford archives." ⁸⁵

Since the boy's parents could not write, it only stands to logic neither could they read. So who taught young Shakespere to read and write and have the prequalification to attend school at the age of seven? His eldest sister Joan was born in 1558, and is presumed to have died at an early age, though we do not know when. His sister Margareta was born in 1562 and died the next year. Our Stratford lad was born in 1564 and three years later his brother Gilbert was born. It therefore stands, that neither his sisters nor his brother (or his parents) taught young Shakespere to read by the age of seven to attend school. Regardless of this solid fact, today's biographers tell us that young Shakespere, in 1571, the year in which Roger Ascham's *Schoolmaster* was published, had his name enrolled by the then master, Thomas Hunt, also curate of Luddington, as a pupil of the town's free grammar school. They offer no corroboration for this; they offer no records for us to investigate, and the conclusion is that their statement is false, and based purely on their own conceptions, in order to give the Stratford lad a solid education.

It is peculiar how Knight's statement on the actor's education reads: "We assume, without any hesitation, that Shakespere did receive in every just sense of the word the education of a scholar; and as such education was to be had at his own door, we also assume that he was brought up at the Free Grammar school of his own town." ⁸⁶ Halliwell-Phillipps relates to the hypothesis of the actor's father and his position, that may lead us to assume how "Shakespere was certainly educated at the free-school at Stratford; for, even had we no direct evidence to that effect, when we consider his father's position in the corporation during his youth, we should most undoubtedly make the same assertion. Stratford had the advantage of a free-school from a very early period, and Edward VI in 1553 granted a Charter, in which it was ordered from thence forth to be called 'The King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon.'" This Charter mentioned gave reference to a grammar school founded upon older foundations by Edward VI, in 1547; ⁸⁷ and is also noted by John Strype. ⁸⁸

Still, we are not told how the Stratford boy was sneaked into the classroom, bypassing preliminary qualifications to be able to read and write in English and in Latin. Parmentier, in his *Histoire de l'Education en Angleterre* (1896) ⁸⁹ writes how the foundation of grammar schools in England were around 150; de Montmorency gives the number as 148 schools founded and 34 additionally capable of offering an education, ⁹⁰ while Adams places the number at 137 from the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission. ⁹¹ Lee emphatically asserts that the number of schools at this time was less than 200. While the academic entrance

⁸⁵ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1916), 6.

⁸⁶ Shakspeare (London: Virtue & Co., 1869).

⁸⁷ Charter 28 Jun. 7 Edw. VI.

⁸⁸ Historical & Biographical Works (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1828), Vol. I.

⁸⁹ Perrin & Cie., Paris.

⁹⁰ de Montmorency's Progress of Education in England, 4.

⁹¹ Adams' History of the Elementary School Contest in England, 18.

requirements of the grammar schools varied, they generally included the ability of the child enrolling to be able to read and write, as stated previously. Furthermore, there are not few cases that demonstrate how the child's ability to read meant the ability to read Latin as well as English.⁹² In a few instances, the requirements are more specific. As an example, in St. Albans the candidate had to pass an examination given by the master to determine how well he had mastered his *Accidence without booke*.⁹³ And in Shrewsbury the following Statute deals with entrance requirements: "The candidate must be able to write his own name with his own hand; read English perfectly; have his accidente without book, and give any case of any number of a noun substantive or adjective, any person of any number of a verb active or passive, and make a Latin by any of the concords, the Latin words being first given him."⁹⁴

The curriculum of the day can be found in the Founder's Statute of a grammar school (Sir John Dean's) in 1553, where the books used are enumerated with the *Accidence and Grammar* set out by King Henry VIII; the *Institutum Christiani* and *Copia* that Erasmus wrote; *Colloquium Erasmi*, *Ovidi Metamorphosis*, Terrance, Tully, Horace, Sallus, Virgil, and others as thought suitable.

The Grammar school of Stratford, according to Leland, "was founded by one Jolepe, a Master of Arts, born in Stratford, where about he had some patrimony, and that he gave to this school."⁹⁵ Malone tells us, that both Leland and Dugdale are "mistaken in the name of the founder, who was Thomas Jolyffe, as appears by a rent-roll of the lands of the guild of the Holy Cross, made October 5, 1530,⁹⁶ and now among the archives of Stratford; the last article of which is, *Redditus terrarum et tenementorum Magistri Thome Jolyffe*. The land which he bequeathed lay in the hamlet of Dodwell. The whole value of a close there, and of his tenements in the old town, and in Rother-street, amounted at that time only to £2. 17s. 6d."⁹⁷

Rowe then has the Stratford boy leaving school and "seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him; and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman⁹⁸ in the neighbourhood of Stratford." This statement, that Shakespere's wife was the daughter of "one Hathaway," was accepted without question until attention was called to the entry in Bishop Whitgift's Register, where she is described as a woman called "Anne Whateley." We will go into a detailed account of this alleged marriage later on, and for now continue with Rowe's account of the deer-stealing incident. "He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company; and amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with

⁹² A. Monroe Stowe, English Grammar Schools in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1908).

⁹³ Carlisle, Statutes (1570), Vol. I. 516, 517.

⁹⁴ Staunton, The Great Public Schools of England: Statutes, 1577, 420.

⁹⁵ Itinerary, Vol. IV. 2. fol. 167, a.

⁹⁶ 22 Henry VIII.

⁹⁷ Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1821), Vol. II. 99.

⁹⁸ Holinshed's Chronicles (1577): "Yeomen are those which by our law are called *Legales homines*, free men born English, and may dispend of their own free land in yearly revenue to the sum of forty shillings sterling, or six pounds as money goeth in our times."

them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage, he made a ballad ⁹⁹ upon him. And though this, probably the first Essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire, for some time, and shelter himself in London.”

Halliwell-Phillipps writes about Rowe’s comment above: “If we accept this narrative, which is the most reliable account of the incident that has been preserved, the date of the poet’s departure from his native town may be assigned to a period shortly after the births of his youngest children, the twins Hamnet and Judith, who were baptized at Stratford on February 2, 1585.” It may be questioned why Rowe’s narrative was accepted “as the most reliable account” since no recorded evidence exists of this deer-stealing tale, which first commences upon loosely put down facts, and continues to exceedingly inaccurate details. Aubrey says nothing about it. Rowe first relates it, with some circumstantiality. The Rev. Richard Davies, Rector of Sapperton and Archdeacon of Lichfield in 1708, is more particular in his narrative, though he makes mistakes regarding known facts, which he might easily have avoided, and therefore shows his incompetency as a reporter. Capell in 1768 brings an increase to the myth, and in 1778, a confirmation of Capell’s news comes from our old friend, William Oldys.

To conclude Halliwell-Phillipps’ account on the matter, he writes: “In pursuing our inquiries into the history of Shakespeare’s life, which must necessarily to some extent be founded on conjecture, it is now necessary to inform the reader that the theft of deer and rabbits was an amusement indulged in by the youths of Shakespeare’s time, and although legally punishable, was regarded by the public as a venial offence, not detrimental to the characters of the persons who committed the depredation.” ¹⁰⁰ This statement, on how inquiries of Shakespeare’s life should “necessarily to some extent be founded on conjecture,” is wrong for a scholar and biographer to even contemplate. Yet, Halliwell-Phillipps was not the only person thinking this way.

An independent testimony of Archdeacon Davies (Vicar of Saperton in Gloucester) in the seventeenth century, is to the effect that Shakespere “was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him often whipped and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native country to his great advancement.” ¹⁰¹ Stopes notices how the Archdeacon, “unsuspected even by Aubrey, that Shakespeare caricatured Sir Thomas Lucy as Justice Clodpate. The inaccuracy of this writer, in referring to Justice Shallow under another name, given to another character, in another play, by another writer, has not been sufficient to prevent successive critics from accepting both his

⁹⁹ Beverley Warner, Famous Introductions to Shakespeare’s Plays (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1906): “This alleged ballad,” Mr. Warner states, “is very doubtful. But an allusion to Sir Thomas Lucy is evident in the Coat-of-Arms assigned to Justice Shallow in the opening scene of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. ”

¹⁰⁰ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

¹⁰¹ Sir Sidney Lee, A Life of William Shakespeare. (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1916), 10.

facts and his conclusions; the whole story arose from early misreading of Shakespeare's plays, misrepresentation of his character, and misunderstanding of his art.”¹⁰² Cruel but true.

Evidence, that Shakespere's father was not a butcher by trade, has been traced back from many records and entries of the Stratford Council. This butcher by trade tale began in 1693, by a person of the name of John Dowdall, who visited Shakespere's tomb and addressed a small treatise¹⁰³ in the form of a letter to Mr. Edward Southwell, endorsed by the latter “description of several places in Warwickshire.” It shows from where the first part of Aubrey's account, in his biography of the alleged Bard, was originally obtained. It shows more than this. It shows how biographers have Shakespeare first engaged in killing a calf “in a high style” instead of being occupied under poetic circumstances.

Rowe mentions a lost ballad satirizing Sir Thomas Lucy which is evidently made up from the allusions in the first scene of the Shakespearean play, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, to which Malone observed “certainly affords ground for believing that our author, on some account or other, had not the most profound respect for Sir Thomas Lucy.” We found this ballad and will give it further on, but must remind the reader of Lucy's involvement in the Arden treason account given earlier. If any author of the time knew of this treason act, it can be said that the author showed “not the most profound respect” for Lucy's character by his then actions against the Arden family, as opposed to some deer-stealing story that is given in more detail later on. Furthermore, about the same time as the Ireland forgeries were circulating, the Lucy-ballad seems to have been “got up” by the Stratford guide John Jordan, a “rhymer” and forger. He had told people that the ballad “was found in a chest of drawers that formerly belonged to a Dorothy Tyler of Shottery (near Stratford); she died in 1778, at the age of eighty.” The verse was inserted in Malone's *Life* but he expressed a belief “that the whole is a forgery.” And good for Malone in stating this, since the ballad is indeed a forgery.

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), in his Preface to his plays (1765) wrote that Shakespere came to London a “needy adventurer and lived for a time by very mean employments.” Even so, William Hall Chapman had difficulty buying the deer-stealing tale: “In order to shield Shakespere from the charge of having deserted his family, his biographers find it convenient to set the young man to deer-stealing so that he may make his flight to London in order to escape from the grasp of his reputed prosecutor, Sir Thomas Lucy, leaving wife and children, a burden upon his poverty-stricken father.”¹⁰⁴ Chapman's allusion to the actor's “poverty-stricken father” was due to the fact that in March 29, 1587, John Shakespere was in prison producing a writ of *habeas corpus*.

Johannes Shakesper protulit breve dominae reginae de *habeas corpus* cum causa coram domina regina r. in curia prox. Post xvij. Pascae

Stratford Court of Records: Mar. 29, 29 Eliz

¹⁰² Shakespeare's Industry (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1916) 127.

¹⁰³ Thorpe's Catalogue of MSS. for 1836, 395.

¹⁰⁴ Shakespeare: The Personal Phase (California: Giles Publishing, 1920).

Rowe further conjectures how the Stratford lad, “had the honour to meet with many great and uncommon marks of favour and friendship from the Earl of Southampton, famous in the histories of that time for his friendship to the unfortunate Earl of Essex. It was to that noble Lord that he dedicated his *Venus and Adonis*, the only piece of his poetry which he ever published himself, though many of his plays were surreptitiously and lamely printed in his life-time. There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare’s that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D’Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted, that my Lord Southampton, at one time, gave him £1,000 to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great, and very rare at any time, and almost equal to that profuse generosity the present age has shown to French dancers and Italian Eunuchs.”

Rowe’s tale of Southampton giving the Stratford actor the amount of £1,000 came from D’Avenant’s imagination, as Rowe states himself. D’Avenant succeeded Ben Jonson as Poet Laureate in 1637, was Knighted by Charles I in 1643, and at the age of sixteen went to Court where he became Page to the Duchess of Richmond, from whose service he passed into that of Greville, whose death deprived D’Avenant of that patronage which was his only hope of advancement at Court. Of D’Avenant’s literary works, a few can be named. The tragedy of *Albovina*, printed in 1629 but never performed, was D’Avenant’s first play. In the Folio edition of 1673 it appears in prose, but it was originally written and printed in blank verse. In the later prose edition, many of the too poetical passages have been struck out, evidently with the intention of making the play more readable for the Restoration public. *The Cruel Brother* came next from D’Avenant’s pen as did *The Just Italian; Love and Honour; The Fair Favourite* (1638); and other adaptations from Shakespearean plays. D’Avenant, in his poem *Gondibert* “plagiarized characters and situations from *The Tempest* on his own account,” writes Ward. We have not investigated this, and cannot add more information on the subject for the reader.

D’Avenant’s parents owned a tavern in Oxford, in the high road between London and Stratford, the route passing through Islip where some tales have the Stratfordian actor frequently travelling to. This tavern sprouted a tale originated from Anthony à Wood’s pen, to which we will come to soon enough, and for now continue with how D’Avenant set the Southampton assumption in motion long after Shakespeare’s death. The amount mentioned, in the time of Elizabeth, was worth as much as £100,000 in today’s currency. Such an amount would have left some trace of evidence, yet it did not. The transaction is questionable for the simple reason that Southampton’s estate was only coming to £3,000 on an annual basis; plus, Burghley interposed a debt of £5,000 on the nobleman in 1594 when the latter refused to marry Elizabeth Vere. The young Earl did not inherit wealth in 1594; he had no money as the Oxford editor Colin Burrow explains.¹⁰⁵ The editor also relates how there are no indications that Shakespeare (we include also Shakespere) and Southampton had any contact with each other in 1594.

¹⁰⁵ Oxford Classics Complete Sonnets and Poems 2002, general editor Stanley Wells.

To satisfy beliefs and to fill the Stratfordian genealogy, Ireland's forgeries of a Southampton collection of letters was created. This collection was investigated after a five year period on another project in 2007 and a brief account may be given. After researching the British Museum archives (long transferred to the British Library) no catalogued item of a Southampton collection was found, yet there does exist a small pamphlet, written by Franklin H. Head, entitled: *Shakespeare's Insomnia, & the Causes Thereof*, which was published in 1887. Within this pamphlet are alleged letters written to Shakespeare from various persons. In the section where the letters are given, the author states, without hesitation, that he was procured absoluteness in their authenticity by the British Museum officials of the time, and that the letters were enclosed in a bundle of manuscripts, entitled: *The Southampton Shakespeare Collection of 1609*.

"They came from the possessions of the Earl of Southampton," Mr. Head states, "whereupon his death, the manuscripts were discovered in the dungeon of the castle." An extract of the letter, Mr. Head received from the Chief Curator, is given:

"The collection contains no letters or manuscripts of Shakespeare. It is composed principally of letters written to Shakespeare by various people, and which, after his death, in some way came into the possession of the Earl of Southampton. His death, so soon after that of Shakespeare, doubtless caused these letters to be lost sight of, and they were but last year [1885] discovered in the donjon [dungeon] of the castle. I have examined the letters for the years you name, and find that copies of the same can be made for £3. 3s. exclusive of postage."¹⁰⁶

Should the letter be authentic, we doubt it, as inserted in Mr. Head's book, then grave error must be laid upon the officer (John Barnacle) who was allegedly the Chief Curator of the British Museum in 1886.¹⁰⁷ Regardless, Mr. Head received his documents and inserts the letters into his work.

Returning to Rowe, he conjectures a mirage meeting took place between Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in 1598. From literary studies, we know that Ben Jonson was not "altogether unknown to the world" in 1598 as Rowe tells us: "His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good nature; Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their Company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public. After this they were professed friends; though I don't know whether the other ever made him an equal return of gentleness and sincerity."

¹⁰⁶ John Barnacle 10th Ass't Sub-Secretary British Museum, Office of Chief Curator Dept. of MSS. (February 14, 1886).

¹⁰⁷ The Senior Assistant-Keeper in 1886 was a Mr. G. W. Porter, and the Keeper of the Department of Printed Books was a Mr. George Bullen. The Superintendant of the Reading Rooms was a Mr. G. K. Fortescue.

According to Rowe, 1598 is the year that most concerns us to research. By 1598, Ben Jonson had already produced his play *Every Man in His Humour*, and was already under the employment of Philip Henslowe (d.1616) at the Rose theatre; it was only after Ben Jonson's duel with another actor (Gabriel Spenser) in 1598 that he left from that theatrical Company. We found in the Middlesex Sessions Roll of 1596 a Coroner's Inquest regarding Spenser.

"Taken at Hollowell Street in St. Leonard's Shoreditch co Midd., on view of the body of James Feake, there lying dead: With verdict that the aforesaid James Feake and a certain Gabriel Spencer late of London yoman were together in the said parish at the dwelling-house of Richard Easte barber, on the 3rd instant between five and six p.m., when they exchanged insulting words, whereupon James Feake, having a copper-candlestick in his right hand, held it with the intention of throwing it at Gabriel Spencer, who, having his rapier in its scabbard, with the same rapier and scabbard gave the said James between the ball of his right eye and the eyebrow a mortal wound, which penetrated to the brain, of which wound the said James Feake languished from the said 3rd inst. at Hollowell Street on which last-named day he died of the said wound."

G. D. R. 20 Jan, 39 Eliz

Feake was buried at St. Leonard's church on December 7, 1596. Apart from this evidence on Spenser, he was last mentioned in Henslowe's *Diary* on May 19, 1598; the year he was engaged in a duel with Ben Jonson on September 22, which is recorded in the same Middlesex Sessions, where a Bill is found against...

...Benjamin Jonson, late of London, yeoman, for killing Gabriel Spenser in the Fields [Hoggesdon or Hoxton Fields, in the parish of St. Leonard] on the said day.¹⁰⁸ The said Ben Jonson with a certain sword of iron and steel called a 'Rapiour' of the price of 3s. gave Gabriel Spenser on his right side a mortal wound of the depth of 6 inches and breadth of one inch, of which he then and there died. Ben Jonson confesses the indictment, asks for the Book, reads like a Clark, marked with the letter 'T' and is delivered according to Statute 18 Eliz. c. 7.

G. D. R. 40 Eliz

In Drummond's *Conversations* with Ben Jonson, the former writes: "Being appealed to the field he [Jonson] had killed his adversary who had hurt him in the arm, and whose sword was 10 inches longer than his, for the which he was imprisoned and almost at the gallows."¹⁰⁹ That Ben Jonson got away with murder in these ventures of his, is attributed to the Elizabethan laws: "If one man kill another upon a sudden quarrel, this is manslaughter; for which the offender must die, except he can read; and if he can read, yet must he lose his goods and be burnt in the hand, but lose no lands."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Cordy Jeaffreson's book, 38.

¹⁰⁹ Shakespeare Society's Transactions (1842), 8.

¹¹⁰ Sir Francis Bacon, *The Use of the Law*.

If one could investigate the whereabouts of Ben Jonson in 1593, the year when Marlowe was assassinated, there is probable cause to connect Rare Ben with Marlowe's death, as both men were serving in the political machinations of the Elizabethan Privy Council at the time. Maybe Aubrey is not well off the path when he says in Marlowe's biography, that Ben Jonson killed Marlowe. Whatever the case, we return to the Jonson-Shakespere connection.

We have no secure source or reference to tell us if the Stratford actor ever addressed a letter or a poem to Ben Jonson, even though the Poet Laureate is considered the anchor of traditional belief to have known the actor; not only that, but it is to the Jonsonian utterances that the apostles of the Stratfordian faith always make their appeal, as Robertson noted: "The testimony of Jonson is monumental and irrefragable."¹¹¹ And it is not surprising that there are two utterances of Ben Jonson's to which the Stratfordians appeal as conclusive evidence that he knew Shakespeare: First, are the lines bearing Ben Jonson's signature prefixed to the First Folio, which shall be investigated soon; and second, is the much-quoted passage in the following extract.

"I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, 'Would he had blotted a thousand,' which they thought a malevolent speech.

I had not told posterity this but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by wherein he most faulted; and to justify mine own candour, for I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometime it was necessary he should be stopped. *Sufflaminandus crat*, [to check or repress in speaking,] as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter, as when he said in the person of Caesar, one speaking to him: 'Caesar, thou dost me wrong.' He replied: 'Caesar did never wrong but with just cause;' and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned."

*Discoveries: De Shakespeare nostrati (1641)*¹¹²

Had Ben Jonson not wrote the poetical allusion "Sweet Swan of Avon" in the First Folio, who would have believed that an unknown actor from Stratford-upon-Avon wrote the Shakespearean plays, sonnets, and poems? An allusion to this "Swan of Avon" should not safely direct us that way, as shall be seen later on.

To conclude this section, there is no doubt, when one reads Nicholas Rowe's *Life of Shakespeare*, how all could have been contrived from hearsay. Remember that Rowe did not travel to Warwickshire, or visit its boroughs to search the Registers; instead, he put blind faith in Thomas Betterton's words, and in others, which has left a sad if not doubtful reputation on

¹¹¹ "The Observer" March 2, 1919.

¹¹² "De Shakespeare nostrati" meaning, Our English Shakespeare.

the manner of this kind of writing. Such an approach, to any biography, shows how authors prefer transcription to research, and of the readiness with which a novel assertion obtains acceptance in the world of letters when introduced by a man of note. “Nobody can write the life of a man, but one who has eat and drunk, and lived in social intercourse with him.”¹¹³

¹¹³ Dr. Samuel Johnson.

II

Sir Sidney Lee (1859–1926)

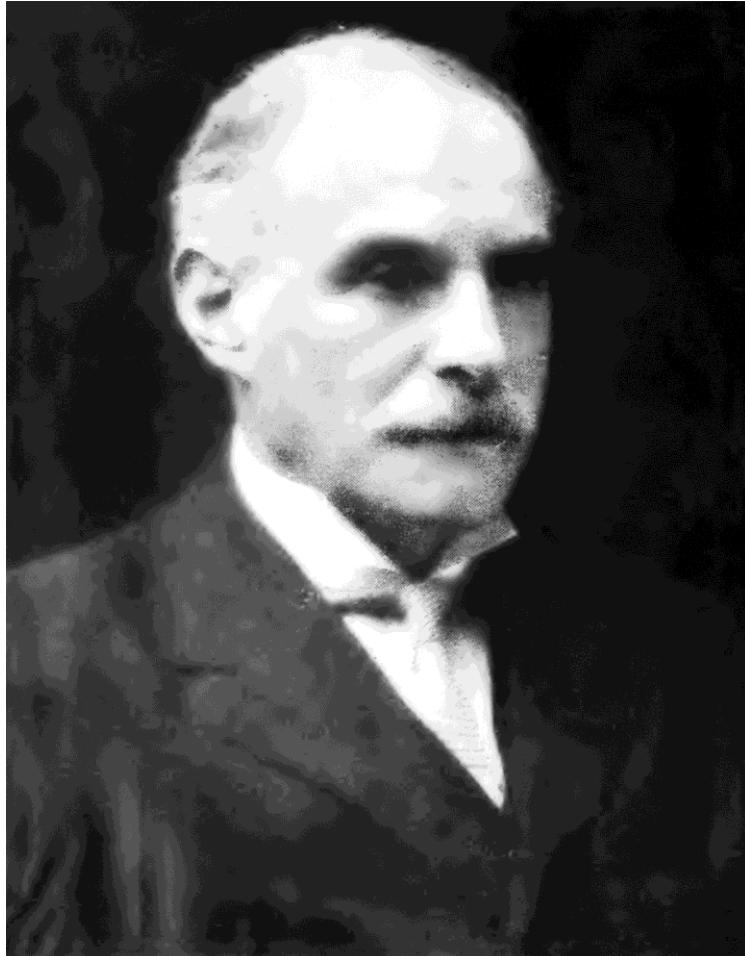


Figure 6: Sir Sidney Lee (1859–1926)

Our next biographer that will concern us is Sir Sidney Lee, who in collaboration with Sir Leslie Stephen was the editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Other famous works of Lee's include his publication of *Alleged Vandalism at Stratford-on-Avon*, printed by Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903; the publication of *Shakespeare's Birthplace Relics*, printed by the Trustees and Guardians in 1910; the publication of *A Life of William Shakespeare*, printed in London by John Lane, the Bodley Head in 1916 and reprinted in 1922.

It is sad to state this, however, Lee was a follower of false information from Rowe's accounts, even though the former is known for his love and admiration of Stratford and its prodigal son. Much attention had been put into Lee's biography; but what does this matter, since the thread of disinformation began with Rowe, and gave no prominence of unraveling further reliable information. According to the reviewers of the times, this particular biography that Lee wrote was thought to have been "masterly work; is an honour to English scholarship, an almost

perfect model of its kind, and it is matter for great national rejoicing that the standard life of Shakespeare has at last been ‘made in England.’ Rarely have we seen a book so wholly satisfying, so admirably planned, so skillfully executed. It is an absolutely indispensable handbook for every intelligent reader of the plays.”¹¹⁴ Beyond this, it is a simple reviewer of the eighteenth century that catches one’s attention who wrote an article in “The Times” stating Lee’s biography of Shakespeare, “Had been twisted by a master artificer into the cunning resemblance of a biography.” But leaving this aside, we go back to the biography at hand, where in the Preface, Lee delves into Shakespearean literature, so far as it is known to him, commenting how literature “still lacks a book that shall supply within a brief compass an exhaustive and well-arranged statement of the facts of Shakespeare’s career, achievement and reputation; that shall reduce conjecture to the smallest dimensions consistent with coherence, and shall give verifiable references to all the original sources of information.” This was a logical statement, since such a book was then sorely needed, and still is; yet Lee hardly supplied that want.

Before continuing, it seems very peculiar how at least two biographers (J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps and Sir Sidney Lee) have confessed that Shakespeare’s biographies are based on conjecture. One may ask what the motive behind these conjectures was. Could it be that nothing could be found in the town of Warwickshire and its boroughs in regards to the man called William Shakespeare? Did they instead stumble upon an actor who was called by many surnames that sounded like the surname Shakespeare, and took him as their next best man to formulate the Bard’s life around him? Still, why do this? The answer lies in one source: The First Folio (1623).

Leonard Digges alludes to a “Stratford Moniment” in the First Folio of 1623, and Ben Jonson alludes to the “Sweet Swan of Avon” in the First Folio of 1623. These poets could not be exaggerators; yet, as the reader proceeds through this work, they will come upon these poetical allusions, which are thoroughly explained. The result, built on fact, not conjecture, shows no such “Stratford Moniment” existed in 1623, but was created around 1632 for the Second Folio publication. It will also become clear, how Ben Jonson’s “Sweet Swan of Avon” was used in abundance by other poets of the time, to bring the harmonic poetry they were penning to exaltation.

Since the motive of conjecture has been established, it seems reasonable to state how such a motive has not been debunked, till now, and this can only be charged upon this fact: There was, in the Elizabethan era, no settled orthography of surnames. A signature of Elizabethan days is not conclusive evidence of the mode in which a person’s name should be spelt; examples are many and would serve no further point to add them all except give one example. The Legitimist spelled a famous name as “Buonaparte” to intimate that Napoleon was an Italian, while the Imperialist spelled it “Bonaparte” to indicate that he was French; and in a somewhat similar way there is a school of critics who employ the surname “Shakespere” to designate the Stratford actor, and reserve the name “Shakespeare” or “Shake-speare” to designate the eminent person whom they regard as the Author. However, this is mostly

¹¹⁴ Blackwood’s Magazine (February 1899).

applied to the Authorship Controversy, since the world has refused to make any such distinction. For over four hundred years the surname “Shakespere” has identified the actor with the playwright.

The biographer, Halliwell-Phillipps, was born and lived many years before Lee made his literary debut, yet the former’s *Outlines* contained more reliable conjecture than Lee’s did, if one could say this, which was termed in its days as a “complete and trustworthy guide-book.” Lee promised to “reduce conjecture to the smallest dimensions;” to gather if he managed this, we add in italics just a few phrases from his work:

There is every *probability* that his ancestors...*probably* his birthplace...*some doubt* is justifiable as to the ordinarily accepted scene of his birth...his summons to act at Court was *possibly* due...one of them doubtless the *alleged* birthplace...William *probably* entered the school...*there seems* good ground for regarding...*probably* in 1577 he was enlisted by his father...it is *possible* that John’s ill-luck...Shakespeare’s friends *may have* called the attention of the strolling players to the homeless lad...the wedding *probably* took place...renders it *improbable*...if, as is *possible*, it be by Shakespeare...it seems *possible*...*probably* his ignorance of affairs...from such incidents *doubtless* sprang...his intellectual capacity and the amiability were *probably* soon recognized...

The above samples are sufficient to call attention to the style of how Lee wrote his biography of Shakespeare in 1916. If he managed to “reduce conjecture to the smallest dimensions” we shall not judge; all that Lee had to give in the shape of “personal history” of the man of Stratford could have been compressed into a short paragraph, as George Steevens had done.

“All that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespere, is that he was born at Stratford, married and had children there, went to London, where he commenced actor, wrote poems and plays; returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried. I must confess my readiness to combat every unfounded supposition respecting the particular occurrences of his life.”

Though Steevens’s account also holds conjecture, we let it pass, because other men of habits of mind as scholarly as Lee and Steevens have been engaged in the Shakespeare enigma all their lives, and have found difficulties in reconciling the life of the Stratford actor with the works of a dramatist called William Shakespeare.

Lee goes to the extremes and pulls himself from all the difficulties of a biographer with the aid of “possibly,” “probably,” “doubtless,” and other qualifying adverbs. Guesses and fictions he substitutes for what he calls “facts.” We might be able to excuse this biographer together with any irregularities, since he himself thought of a biography in a different manner. Let us read what Lee wrote about the writing of biographies when he was President of the English Association, in 1918.

“It is the biographer’s first duty to sift and to interpret his sweepings. Only when that process is accomplished can he hope to give his findings essential form. Unity of spirit, cohesion of tone, perspective, these are the things which a due measure of the creative faculty will alone guarantee. Otherwise, the delineation will lack the resemblance of life and reality. Unlike the dramatist or the novelist, the biographer cannot invent incident to bring into relief his conceptions of the truth about the piece of humanity which he is studying. His purpose is discovery, not invention. Fundamentally his work is a compilation, an industriously elaborated composition, a mosaic. But a touch of the creative faculty is needed to give animation to the dead bones; to evoke the illusion that the veins ‘verily bear blood.’”¹¹⁵

Though Lee wrote a biographer’s “purpose is discovery, not invention,” within the same paragraph he admits it hard to stay away from adding “creative faculty” to animate “the dead bones” for the sake of “illusion.” We can excuse him with mild intents toward his thoughts on how biographies should be written. We cannot do the same for his inconsideration to literature, specifically, to Ben Jonson’s allusion in the First Folio (1623).

Sweet swan of Avon! What a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James!

Allusions are often used to summarize broad, complex ideas or emotions in one quick, powerful image. They serve an important function in writing in that they allow the reader to understand a difficult concept by relating to an already familiar story; the familiar story being of the “Swan.” Poetical allusion is entirely different than biographical illusion: In the former, it is needed; in the latter, it is contraindicated. Since truth gathers dust in the unlikeliest of places, and however literary allusions to Shakespeare in the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries have been collected, as in *Shakespeare’s Century of Praise*, revised and reedited by J. Munro as *The Shakespeare Allusion Books* 1909, first published by Ingleby in 1879, the intent to prove that the identification of the Stratford actor with the poet Shakespeare, in poetical allusion and/or literary illusion, is an unsupported fact for anyone to rely on. It is the same as informing the public that Shakespeare was “often whipped and sometimes imprisoned” for the act of stealing rabbits.

In Ingleby’s above-mentioned edition (*Allusion Books*), he writes: “The prose works published in the latter part of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries contain abundant notices of every poet of distinction save Shakespeare, whose name and works are only slightly mentioned. It is plain that the Bard of our admiration was unknown to the men of that age.” Furthermore, when we come to consider the writings of Shakespeare, and compare them with the recorded life of an actor from Stratford, called Shakespere, difficulties appear.

¹¹⁵ The Perspective of Biography (London: English Association, 1918), 9.

We are told “Shakespere was the son of a Warwickshire peasant, or very inferior yeoman, by the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. Both his father and mother were so ignorant that they signed with a mark, instead of writing their names. (Figure 7) Few of their friends could write theirs, Shakespere probably had a little instruction in Latin in the Stratford grammar school. When at twenty-two years of age, he fled from Stratford to London, we may be sure that he had never seen half a dozen books, other than his horn-book, his Latin Accidence, and a Bible. Probably there were not half a dozen others in all Stratford.”¹¹⁶

A horn-book, noted by Richard Grant White in the comment just given, was also known as the “A.B.C.-book.” It contained, in black-letter, the alphabet (in small and capital letters), the sign for “and,” the vowels (alone and combined with *b*, *c*, and *d* syllables), the *In-nomine* which meant “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen,” and the *Pater-noster* in English. There were altogether twenty rows of letters, syllables, and words, and before the first was set a cross, also known as a “cross-row.” The first row of syllables were: ab eb ib ob ub | ba be bi bo bu.

Now Durham, in his *Introduction to Shakespeare* (1910) came to the conclusion that “we have more than one reference by his [Shakespere’s] contemporaries, identifying the actor with the poet, some so strong that the Baconians themselves can explain them away only by assuming that the writer is speaking in irony or that he willfully deceives the public. By assumptions like that, anyone could prove anything.” It is hard to disagree with Durham’s statement; however, after giving in previous areas the tales that were coming from various unreliable sources to Rowe for his biography on the alleged Bard, a pseudo-biography that has formed the Bard’s life as we know it today, it is not difficult to realize why not only Baconians disbelieve the Stratford actor to be the Bard, but it could be said of any person with some sensitivity to finally realize this. As Mr. L. A. Sherman well said, “anyone acquainted with the Elizabethan prose-writers is well aware that their sentences are prevailingly either crabbed or heavy, and it is often necessary to re-read, sometimes to ponder, before a probable meaning reveals itself.”¹¹⁷

Keeping Sherman’s statement in mind, and returning to Ben Jonson’s poem in the First Folio, the poetical word “swan” originated from the Sanskrit language meaning “sound” because the ancients believed the eggs of the swan were hatched by thunder and lightning. In Iceland there is a folklore describing how the swan’s tone stimulates a thawing in icebergs, which is consequently respected as one of the animal’s great charms; etymologists entitle it, “but beautiful nonsense.” Anyone familiar with ancient Greek mythology knows of the first “swan song” which is traced back to the days of Socrates; specifically, Plato’s *Phaedo*, fourth century B.C.; condemned to death on charges of immorality and heresy, Socrates welcomed his approaching doom because he believed it would draw him closer to a meeting with the god Apollo. The swan was one of Apollo’s favoured creatures, and men had observed how the swan would cry loudly and long. Socrates believed swans “having sung all their life long, do then sing more, and more sweetly than ever, rejoicing in the thought that they are about to go away to Apollo, whose ministers they are.” Euripedes, Aristotle, Seneca, and Cicero also believed as

¹¹⁶ From the “Atlantic Magazine” and quoted in Reed’s Bacon versus Shakespeare.

¹¹⁷ Analytics of Literature (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1893).

Plato did, that the swan would bring one closer to the gods. Others argued against the myth; Pliny refused to believe it. Some sources attribute the legend to the sixth century fabler Aesop, whilst Chaucer, around 1374, alludes to the tale twice in his literary work. Douce's *Illustrations*, a work which holds so distinguished and standard a place in Shakespearian literature, also has reference, "that a swan utters musical sounds at the approach of death, is credited among the ancients by Plato, Chrysippus, Aristotle, Euripides, Philostratus, Cicero, Seneca, and Martial; moderns treat this as a vulgar error."

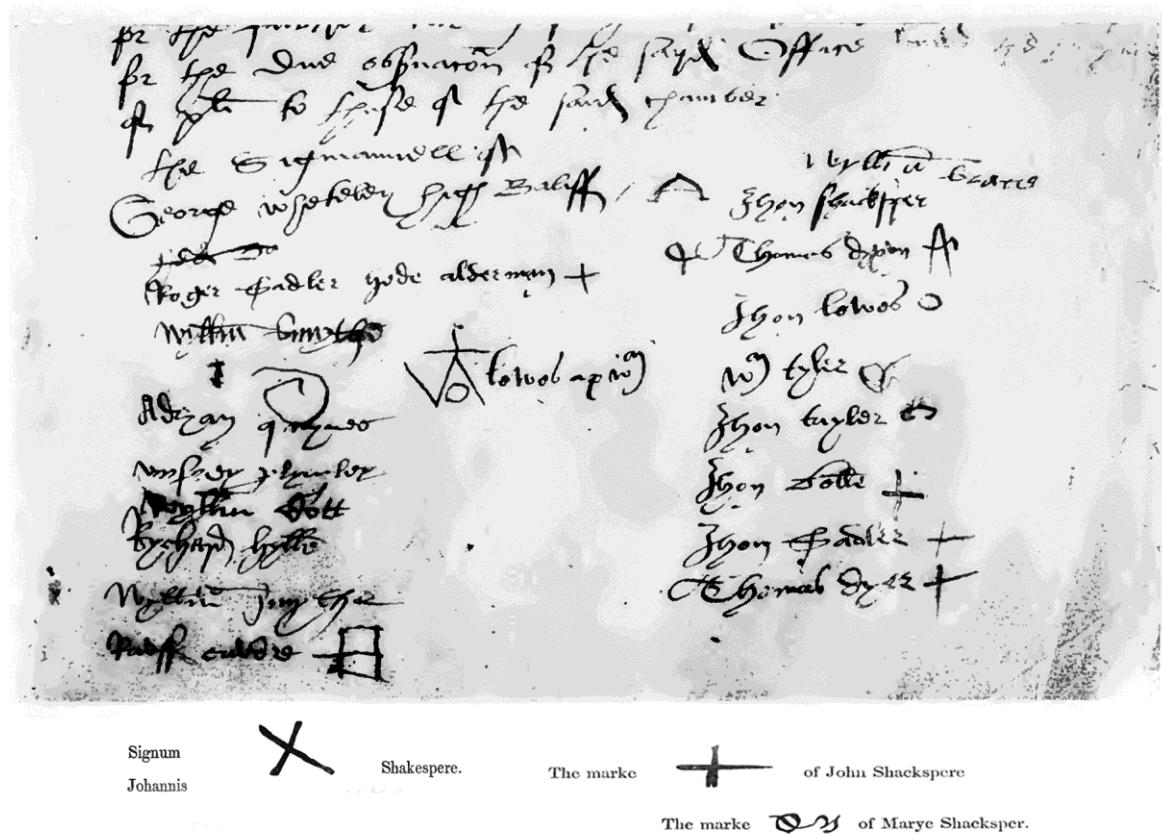


Figure 7: Samples of John Shakespere's mark

In the Elizabethan era, the "swan story" of Ariosto was very much believed in, as Sir Francis Bacon (1560–1626) tells us:

Ariosto feigns that at the end of the thread of every man's life there hangs a little medal or collar on which his name is stamped; and that time waits upon the shears of Atropos, and as soon as the thread is cut, snatches the medals, carries them off, and presently throws them into the river Lethe; and about the river there are many birds flying up and down, who catch the medals, and after carrying them round and round in their beak a little while, let them fall into the river, only there are some swans which, if they get a medal with a name, immediately carry it off to a temple consecrated to immortality.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ James Spedding. Works: De Augmentis (Vol. VIII, p. 428; Vol. IV. 307).

Lee, in 1918, also gave reference to Ariosto's swan:

The Italian poet Ariosto imagined, with some allegorical vagueness that at the end of every man's thread of life there hung a medal stamped with his name, and that, as Death severed Life's thread with its fatal shears, Time seized the medal and dropped it into the river of Lethe. Nevertheless a few, a very few, of the stamped medals were caught as they fell towards the waters of oblivion by swans, who carried off the medals and deposited them in a temple or museum of immortality. Ariosto's swans are biographers, whose function it is to rescue a few medals of distinguishable personality from the flood of forgetfulness into which the indistinguishable mass is inevitably destined to sink.¹¹⁹

Coming to the word "Avon," it can be found in the Celtic dialect to mean "river." British survives today in a few English place names and river names. However, some of these are pre-Celtic. The best example is perhaps that of the Rivers Avon, which comes from the British *abona* meaning "river" compared with the Welsh *afon*; Cornish *avon*; Cumbric *avon*; Irish *abhainn*; Manx *awin*; Breton *aven*; and, the Latin cognate being *amnis*. The British *abona* ("river") which is in Gloucestershire and its adjacent settlement, is widely accepted as a Latin term of the name for the River Avon which is to the south of the roman settlement of the same name at Sea Mills in Bristol. It shows that the Romans would use the letter "b" as the nearest Latin equivalent for a "v." It is generally claimed that "Avon" is a Celtic word on this evidence. However it is virtually unknown in Cornish place-names,¹²⁰ though it occurs in Welsh as *afon*, to mean "river" and in Middle Breton to mean "Aven" which was another of the deities of the Phoenician Canaanites, where temples to this god were called "Beth-Aven," or "House of Aven." The "human" history of the Rivers Avon can be traced to the Roman era, where they built around the spa waters at Bath but also created settlements at Sea Mills, Newton St. Loe and Keynsham. The re-routing of the River Frome took place in the late thirteenth century to create a new harbour area which still exists, known as St. Augustine's Parade. We know of other Rivers Avon in Britain, that also pass through Gloucestershire.

1. River Avon in Devon: Known as the "River Aune;" a gem of a river which is no more than a big stream in parts.
2. River Avon in Warwickshire: Known as the Upper Avon or Warwickshire Avon.
3. River Avon in Hampshire: Known as the Salisbury Avon or Hampshire Avon.
4. River Avon in Bristol: Known as the Lower Avon or Bristol Avon, and is one of the great historic rivers of the world. It was from here that Cabot sailed in 1497 in the "Matthew" to land in the Newfoundland.
5. River Avon Anker: This used to run into the river Thames.

With these explanations before us on the allusion of the "Swan" in poetry, and the "Rivers Avon" throughout Britain, one can analyze Ben Jonson's allusion in a more understandable manner. He begins his verse with "Sweet swan of Avon!" Here, the Poet Laureate alludes to the swan that carries "off the medals" that has "a name" and immediately carries "it off to a

¹¹⁹ The Perspective of Biography (London: English Association, 1918, 8).

¹²⁰ Padel (1985).

temple consecrated to immortality and deposited them in a temple or museum of immortality." We know that Ben Jonson was using the Celtic dialect "Avon" to mean "river," as explained. Therefore, Ben Jonson has the "Sweet Swan" carry off the medal with Shakespeare's name. "Ariosto's swans are biographers," Lee said, "whose function it is to rescue a few medals of distinguishable personality from the flood of forgetfulness into which the indistinguishable mass is inevitably destined to sink." Ben Jonson was not about to leave the name Shakespeare "destined to sink" into "forgetfulness," and the manner which he chose to communicate this with the reader, was to allude to the swan that was known to provide immortality in a temple or in a museum. This temple or museum could be seen as the First Folio of 1623. The allusion of the "swan" was not only used by Ben Jonson; it can be read in other verses of poetry, and we may give some examples.

Epitaph to Samuel Daniel

By
George Daniel
1646

The sweetest Swan of Avon to the fair
And cruel Delia passionately sings:
Other men's weaknesses and follies are
Humour and wit in him; each accent brings
A sprig to crown him poet, and contrive
A monument in his own works to live.

Within the known four Rivers of Avon in Britain, the above verse by George Daniel is alluding to the Avon which flows by Bath, a beautiful stream, though less renowned in song. The writer of the verse was a poet, who, although bearing the same surname, does not appear to have been a relation of the Somersetshire poet, being one of the sons of Sir Ingleby Daniel, of Beswick, in the East Riding of Yorkshire. This George Daniel left a large folio volume filled with his compositions in verse in the library of Mr. Caldecott and afterwards of Lord Kingsborough. The author was a Royalist living in retirement at Beswick in 1646, when the volume was being written and decorated with some valuable miniatures.

Another example which alludes to the swan is that of Aston Cokaine written in 1658 in a Funeral Elegy to Michael Drayton (1563–1631) the poet. At the age of ten, Drayton was made Page to a person of quality, possibly Sir Godfrey Godere, to whom he says he owed the most of his education. There is nothing to prove whether he went to a University. He wrote about twenty plays which were very popular. For many years, Drayton was indebted to the Countess of Bedford for substantial obligations. Towards the close of his life he lived with the Earl of Dorset; when he died, the Countess of Dorset erected the monument over his grave in Westminster Abbey. Drayton was not born in Stratford, so the allusion to the "Swans of Avon" in the following Elegy, is to the River Avon Anker, which used to run into the river Thames.

Funeral Elegy
By
Aston Cokaine
1658

You Swans of Avon, change your fates and all
Sing and then die at Drayton's funeral;
Sure shortly there will not a drop be seen
And the smooth pebbled bottom be turned green
When the nymphs (that inhabit in it) have
(As they did Shakespeare) wept thee to thy grave.

It is not difficult to understand then, how poets alluded to the “Swan” and the “Rivers Avon.” We even have allusion to Elizabethan swans from many manuscript plays (in Latin) that were performed at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the Reign of Elizabeth.¹²¹ The manuscripts connect with some games of swans that were of much interest in those days; an “upping of Swans” that was some diversion. In an interesting volume entitled, *Mr. A. J. Kempe's Loseley Manuscripts*,¹²² which contains so many curious and valuable documents connected with public and private affairs in the Reigns from Henry VIII to James I, are documents, which amusingly illustrate the subject of swans: They are not however of so early a date as the subsequent warrant for appointing Commissioners in Buckinghamshire, which was directed to Sir Nicholas Bacon (Lord Keeper). The object was to authorize the persons mentioned, to inquire into offences against the laws for the preservation of the Queen's swans.¹²³

Ingleby came to the conclusion that Ben Jonson was not writing about the author of those plays, when he wrote his “Swan” verse, but was writing of the actor.¹²⁴ What Ingleby is alluding to, is that possibly there was an author of the plays, as well as an actor of the plays; the author being still alive, and the actor being already dead. However, arguments put forward by Stratfordians are strongly against this.

Having established how allusion can manipulate meanings in poetry, the sadness is to whoever first instigated that William Shakespeare was dead and buried in Stratford due to Ben Jonson's allusion above explained. Whoever the instigator was, the “Sweet Swan” was no doubt connected to Leonard Digges's Eulogy, and the “Stratford Moniment,” which we will now come to.

The poet and translator, Leonard Digges, was born in London in 1588. He was allowed to reside at Oxford University where he died on April 7, 1635.¹²⁵ His body was buried, Wood records, “in that little old Chapel of University College, sometime standing about the middle of

¹²¹ Henry Ellis, English History (1825).

¹²² (John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1836).

¹²³ J. P. Collier, Egerton Papers (1840).

¹²⁴ Shakespere Controversy (Cambridge Press, 1861).

¹²⁵ Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1908), Vol. V, p. 976.

the present quadrangle, which was pulled down in 1668.”¹²⁶ In 1623, when the First Folio was published, Digges had just returned from his travels; he was a resident in University College, “but writing for the booksellers, and his verse to Shakespeare might have been composed at the request of the publishers; it is, however, possible, that the verse proceeded from his genuine admiration, and that he might have gone from Oxford to Stratford, and there have actually seen the monument to which he alludes.”¹²⁷ Such an assumption, that Digges “might have gone from Oxford to Stratford” at an earlier time than the publication of the First Folio in 1623, was necessary to be stated by James Boaden (1762–1839) the English biographer, dramatist, and journalist, because no record exists as to when the monument was actually created. Since Digges wrote for booksellers, this would mean he would be paid to write his eulogies or verses, and whatever he wrote would not necessarily be based on actual fact, as long as poetical allusion took center stage.

Similarly, we can add Martin Droeshout, engraver of the image on the First Folio’s frontispiece, into the same category of hired artists, since all encyclopedias and dictionaries of art, mention Droeshout was also employed by the booksellers.¹²⁸

Lewis Bostelmann writes: “Leonard Digges, who wrote the lines in the 1623 Folio, about the dissolution of the Stratford Monument, was, at the time a ‘town wit’ who frequented Paul’s Walk in hopes of picking up scraps or meeting opportunities of turning his wits into cash by any means then prevalent.”¹²⁹ We know of another memorable verse by Digges on Shakespeare, which exists on a fly-leaf inscription in a 1613 edition of Lope da Vega’s *Rimas* where he refers to “this Book of Sonnets, which with Spaniards here is accounted of their Lope da Vega as in England we should of our Will Shakespeare.” We have no absolute record of when this inscription was inserted, even though the edition mentioned is from 1613, and it does not state that “our Will Shakespeare” was then either living or was born in Stratford. It only tells us that a William Shakespeare existed. But the Eulogy in question (Figure 8) mentions the Bard’s “Stratford Moniment.”

The word “moniment” has a definition being something to preserve memory; a reminder; a monument; hence, a mark; an image; a superscription; a record.¹³⁰ There are no specifics as to which Stratford town this was, and more details would have been forthcoming, since other towns of the same name existed in England at the time, as did other Rivers Avon, which was explained earlier. However, Digges wrote for booksellers, and what he wrote did not need verification...or maybe it did.

In tracing the Parish-Registers of Stratford, if it is not a forgery, nothing comes to light regarding the early construction of this “Stratford Moniment.” The lack of evidence is not surprising, because Richard Savage, in 1924, had accumulated all town records, bringing them

¹²⁶ Athenae Oxoniensis (1821), Vol. I, pp. 636–639; Vol. II, pp. 592, 593.

¹²⁷ J. Boaden, Inquiry to the Portraits of Shakespeare (London: Robert Triphook, Old Bond St., 1824), 485.

¹²⁸ (a) George Williamson, Brian’s Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1904), Vol. III; (b) George Steevens and Samuel Johnson, Plays of Shakspeare (London: J. Nichols & Son, 1813).

¹²⁹ Rutland (New York: Rutland Publishing Co., 1911).

¹³⁰ Webster, Revised Unabridged Dictionary (C. & G. Merriam Co., 1913).

into a bulk of ten volumes. He writes: “All records for the years 1644/5/6, 1653, 1674/5/6 and 1690 were void.”¹³¹ Regardless, without substantial evidence of this monument’s construction, the *Catalogue of the Shakespeare Exhibition*, printed by the Oxford Press in 1916, tells us that “the Bust in Holy Trinity church, Stratford, [was] carved before 1625 by Garret Johnson, the younger.” The editors do not offer any corroboration of their claim, and many more assumptions surfaced to coincide with Digges’s 1623 Eulogy.

Another particular theory found came from 1928, given by Edgar I. Fripp, who was the Trustee of Shakespeare’s Birthplace. He notes how in 1621/2, the Trinity church “walls were mended and painted and the windows glazed, and the building was presentable, for the first time since the poet’s interment, when his old friends and fellow actors of the King’s Company paid their one and only visit to Stratford, presumably to see his monument, in the summer of 1622.”¹³² Throughout Fripp’s statement, he has a reasonable excuse on how the monument was not created after the actor’s death in 1616, and then, in closing, he needs to hypothesize that a commemorative monument could have been placed “in the summer of 1622.” Again, presumption substitutes corroboration in order to coincide with Digges’s 1623 Eulogy. On tracking down Fripp’s mending and painting of the Trinity church, the investigation brought forth the following facts.

On March 17, 1619, the *Vestry Minute-Book*¹³³ gives entry of “the decays of the parish church of Stratford-upon-Avon” that was viewed by “Wm. Combe,” who was employed by the Earl of Warwick to collect the rents of the manor of Stratford. Other churchwardens were also involved in this project: Gathering their survey on the restoration of various areas in the church, including graves and monuments. But no mention of Shakespere (or Shakespeare’s) tombstone, monument, or effigy was found to have been entered as an area for repair in the year 1621/2 as Fripp tells us. Furthermore, no entry of any sort of mending could be traced for the year we are interested in; the only close enough entry is for “27 day of April, 1623, Item they have paid this year in repair of the church as appears by their Accompts.” There is another entry for a “repair of the church and glazing of the windows” (as Fripp conjectures) but the date is for October 13, 1646. Various other repairs of the Parish appear for July 1626; October 1626; February 25, 1627; June 26, 1630; December 21, 1631; August 17, 1632; July 13, 1633, and finally for July 6, 1636. Interestingly, no mention in the *Vestry Minute-Book* of any repairs done, nor of any creation given, to a “Stratford Moniment,” that Digges was alluding to in the First Folio.

Before leaving Fripp’s theory, in the Wheller manuscripts there is an entry of restoration of the church but it occurred in March 1691: “The chancel was repaired, the contributors being chiefly the descendants of those who had monuments of their ancestors there. The names of most of these are given, but there is no record of any descendants, friends of Shakespeare, so that it may be supposed the tomb was left in a worse state of repair than the others.”¹³⁴

¹³¹ Minutes and Accounts (Dugdale Society, 1924) Vol. V.

¹³² Shakespeare’s Stratford (1928).

¹³³ George Arbuthnot, *Vestry Minute-Book 1617-1699* (London: Bedford Press), undated publication.

¹³⁴ Wheller Misc. Vol. IV. 99.

Robert Frazer tells us: "In 1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot, Shakespere paid £440 for an unexpired lease of tithes in Stratford. This purchase conferred the right of sepulture within the chancel of the church, and to it we probably owe the preservation of the Shakespeare monument." ¹³⁵ Stratford tithes, which consisted of those in the parish and in "Old Stratford" as it was termed, were rented from former monastery land, and granted to the governing Corporation of Stratford, which leased them to individuals who often subleased them to others. Frazer's "probably," exiles the desertion on this subject too quickly, and in order to gather sufficient evidence if the Stratfordian actor's monument existed prior to the First Folio of 1623, and if that monument was what Digges was alluding to, we needed to track down further references than already given.

In Stopes' *Shakespeare's Family* (1901) there is a consideration to check, which comes from William Camden the historian who was Ben Jonson's schoolmaster. Camden was born in the Old Bailey, London, on May 2, 1551; he was one of the few eminent Englishmen who ever came from the metropolis. His father was a painter and stainer, a circumstance which Camden, in his fame, never forgot, but left at his death, a gilt bowl to the Company of Painters and Stainers of London, inscribed with the words: "The gift of Win. Camden, son of Sampson Camden, Painter, of London." His mother was a Curwen, of an old family in Cumberland. "Camden," writes his biographer (Eugene Lawrence), "was born an antiquarian. Of the few particulars known of his childhood, he has himself related the most important. Sir Sidney, amiable and gifted, was Camden's earliest patron. Much of his research was put on hold or found blocked from the lack of access to material; hence Sir Robert Cotton's generosity in supplying him with materials and the two Goodmans not only aided him with money and books, but secured for him the appointment in Westminster School." ¹³⁶

In 1586, in the tenth year from its commencement, Camden's *Britannia* appeared with a dedication to Burghley. The author was thirty-six when he published the first and imperfect edition of his great work, the completion which employed the remainder of his life. "We can readily imagine with what joy such intellects as Bacon, Raleigh or Burghley, must have hailed the appearance of such a work; it sold rapidly, and in three years passed through three editions, besides two published abroad." ¹³⁷ Soon enough however, a book appeared, entitled: "A Discovery of certain errors published in print in the much commended *Britannia*." It was without the name of printer or bookseller, and was evidently "the assault of a concealed and unscrupulous enemy." It charged Camden with gross plagiarism, and endeavoured to convict him of various serious mistakes. The author was discovered to be a Mr. Brooke, the York herald, who had been an aspirant for the place of Clarencieux. Brooke charged Camden with merely copying from the unpublished papers of two antiquarians, Glover and Leland, which had been placed in his hands.

¹³⁵ The Silent Shakespeare (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915), 54.

¹³⁶ The Lives of British Historians (New York: C. Scribner, 1855), Vol. I.

¹³⁷ Ibid.,

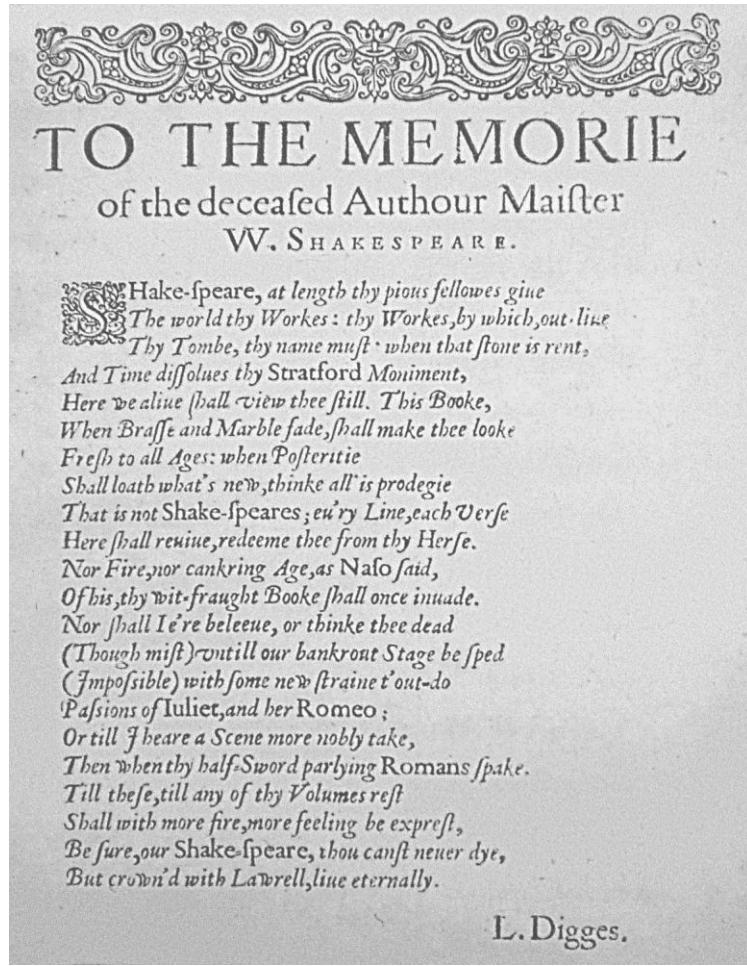


Figure 8: Leonard Digges's Eulogy from the First Folio (1623)

Glover had been Somersetshire herald: he was deeply skilled in antiquities but had died early before he had been able to prepare anything for publication, leaving behind him a confused mass of papers which had been communicated by Burghley to Camden, and the latter had made use of them as far as they served his purpose, giving all due credit to Glover. John Leland was empowered by Henry VIII in 1533 to search the libraries of all Cathedrals and Colleges for the materials of an itinerary; and, in the meantime, was directed to employ a curate to discharge the duties of the parish of which he was rector, while he made a general survey of England. Leland died of "insanity," leaving a large collection of papers, of which Camden made some use; but which gave no ground for the charge brought against him. The hostile criticism of Brooke therefore soon sank into neglect.

Camden was a member of the first British Antiquarian Society established during James's Reign. The learned men of the metropolis had agreed to meet weekly, and Sir Henry Spelman (also member) has left the following account of the origin of this Society: "About forty years ago, divers gentlemen of London, studious of antiquities, framed themselves into a college of antiquarians, appointing to meet every Friday weekly, in term, at a place agreed upon, and, for learning's sake, to confer upon some questions in that faculty, and to sup together. The place,

after a meeting or two, became certain at Darby House, where the Herald's office is kept, and two questions were propounded to be handled at the next that followed; so that every man had a se'night [sic] to advise upon them, and then deliver his opinion. That which seems material, was by one of the company (chosen for the purpose) to be entered in a book, so it might remain to posterity. The Society increased daily, many persons of worth as well noble as learned joining themselves to it." The society was abolished but managed to reestablish in 1614. Some of the prominent members were, Sir James Ley (Knight, then Attorney of the Court of Wards); the Earl of Marlebury (Lord Treasurer of England); Sir Bruce Robert Cotton (1571–1631) Knight and baronet;¹³⁸ Sir John Davis, Sir Richard St. George, Mr. Hackwell (Queen Anne's solicitor), and William Camden. "Of these, the Lord Treasurer, Sir Robert Cotton, Mr. Camden and myself," says Spelman, "had been of the original foundation, and were all then living of that sort, to my knowledge, saving Sir John Doderidge, Knight, Justice of the King's Bench."

William Camden died on November 9, 1623, in the seventy-third year of his age, and was buried at Westminster Abbey. Having never married, from the fear of interruption to his studies, he left the remainder of his property in charity to the poor and in legacies to his relations. He gave his books of heraldry to the Herald Office, and his manuscripts and printed books to Sir Robert Cotton; but by some confusion in the terms of his last Will & Testament, the printed books, designed for the Cottonian collection, were seized and removed to the library of Westminster. This could be deemed as fortunate, since on October 23, 1731, the Cottonian Library caught fire, turning manuscripts to ash. "The number of manuscript volumes contained in the library before the fire was 958; of which are lost, burnt, or entirely spoiled, 114; and damaged 98: so that the said library, consisted of 746 entire volumes, and 68 defective ones," Mr. Sims wrote in his *Hand-Book to the Library of the British Museum*; "Since 1842 one hundred volumes written upon vellum, and ninety-seven upon paper, have been restored under the directions of Sir Frederic Madden."¹³⁹

Coming back to the matter at hand, Camden mentioned Shakespeare in the following manner, as Stopes presumes: "In the chancel lies William Shakespeare, a native of this place, who has given ample proof of his genius and great abilities in the forty-eight plays he has left behind him." The reference that Stopes alludes to should have been in Camden's *Britannia* published in the year 1617. We did a search in this work but in vain; there was no reference on Shakespeare under the sections of Warwickshire, or Stratforshire. Remaining on this course, another similar reference came from a Website, stating that the mention of Shakespeare was to be found in Camden's *Remaines*, and also in the second edition of Camden's *Britannia* published in 1637. However, none of the mentioned editions were fruitful; no mention of Shakespeare was found. We therefore turned to Camden's *Remaines of a greater work concerning Britain*, a first edition published in 1605 and intended as a supplement to his

¹³⁸ Founder of the Cottonian Library, and a prominent Parliamentarian in the Reign of Charles I. The collection of historical documents that he amassed in his library eventually formed the basis of the manuscript collection of the British Museum. The library caught fire in 1731 that easily destroyed historical documents.

¹³⁹ Memoir of William Oldys, Esq (London: Spottiswoode, 1862).

Britannia work, reprinted in 1674 by Charles Harper. In this work, under the Chapter “Poems” (page 344), as a last entry was the following:

“These may suffice for some poetical descriptions of our ancient poets; if I would come to our time, what a world could I present to you out of Sir Philip Sidney, Ed. Spencer, John Owen, Samuel Daniel, Hugh Holland, Ben Jonson, Thomas Champion, Michael Drayton, George Chapman,¹⁴⁰ John Marston, William Shakespeare, and other most pregnant wits of these our times, whom succeeding ages may justly admire.”¹⁴¹

Finally, Camden mentioning William Shakespeare (last in line); still, no mention to any monument or effigy in his memory; no mention of Shakespeare in Camden’s *Britannia* as Stopes and the Website told of. If they had found some other edition, that we had not, fair enough, and we move beyond the *folie à plusieurs* (madness of many).

It is now time to go back, prior to 1674 of Camden’s mention on Shakespeare; to an uncertain year, as there is no means of knowing exactly when this poem of William Basse’s was written; however, it will not be far wrong to conclude it was written after February 1616, since the poem mentions the poet Beaumont, who died in that month and year, and there is reference to Shakespeare and his “threefold, fourfold tomb.” Basse also alludes to Gabriel Spenser, who died in a duel with Ben Jonson, on September 22. 1598, of which account was given earlier.

Poem of William Basse
Unknown Date

Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie.
A little nearer Spenser to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb.

Basse has no reference to the “Stratford Moniment” and mentions only a tomb. Next reference goes to 1620, and the poem “The Praise of Hemp-seed” by John Taylor (the Water Poet). Taylor speaks of Shakespeare here, among other famous poets, but only alludes to his works.

Then to 1627, and Michael Drayton’s “Battaile of Agincourt;” an elegy “To my most dearly-loved friend Henry Reynolds Esquire, of Poets & Poesie,” in which Drayton talks of various poets, and of Shakespeare, but no mention is made of the “Stratford Moniment.”

To the year 1630 is an anonymous writer who wrote a jest (numbered 259), and inserted it in a work, entitled: *Banquet of Jests or Change of Cheer*. “One travelling through Stratford-upon-Avon, a town most remarkable for the birth of famous William Shakespeare, and walking in

¹⁴⁰ George Chapman (1599–1634) was the translator of Homer, and born near Hitchin. Chapman enjoyed the royal patronage of King James and Prince Henry, and the friendship of Spenser and Jonson. According to Oldys, he “preserved in his conduct the true dignity of poetry, which he compared to the flower of the sun that disdains to open its leaves to the eye of a smoking taper” and wrote early and copiously for the stage.

¹⁴¹ William Camden. *Remains Concerning Britain* (London: Charles Harper, 1674).

the church to do his devotion, espied a thing there worthy observation, which was a tombstone laid more than three hundred years ago, on which was engraved an Epitaph to this purpose: ‘I Thomas such a one, and Elizabeth my wife here under lie buried, and know Reader I. R. C. and I. Chrystoph. Q. are alive at this hour to witness it.’¹⁴² The only information given from this anonymous author, just two years before the Second Folio was published, is that the town was known for the “birth of famous William Shakespeare;” no mention is given of a monument, effigy or tombstone that depicted the name of Shakespere (or Shakespeare) when one walked “in the church to do his devotion.” The only allusion is to a “three hundred” year old Epitaph. The above jest was written in 1630, only fourteen years after Shakespere’s death; one would imagine a monument was already on display in his memory, yet not a hint of his resting place is given.

Only one year later, and a year prior to the publication of the Second Folio, John Weever, in his *Ancient Funeral Monuments* (1631) which is a volume that recorded inscriptions from various monuments around England, an inscription from Shakespere’s gravestone is found, but no “Stratford Moniment” is directly mentioned.¹⁴³ It could be that John Weever forgot to mention the monument or did not notice it, and only wrote of the gravestone inscription, since there is a tendency for people to look down rather than up, and the monument is resting, at least in present days, a little above the horizon on the north wall of the chancel and above Shakespere’s grave.

Coming down to 1632, the year of the Second Folio publication, we have the memorable epitaph of John Milton (1608–1674).

Epitaph
By John Milton

What needs my Shakespere for his honoured bones,
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star pointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need’st thou such weak witness of thy fame?
Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.

Milton’s epitaph does not offer any conclusive evidence if the “Stratford Moniment” was already created in 1632, even though Russell French in his *Shakspeareana Genealogica* tries to persuade us, that the “bust was executed only seven years after his [Shakespere’s] death by a good sculptor, Gerard Johnson.”¹⁴⁴ French of course was following announcements that we will soon come to, and Halliwell-Phillipps should have known better than to follow the lead

¹⁴² Banquet of Jests or Change of Cheer (1630). In Ingleby’s *Shakespere Allusion-Book* (1910), Vol. I. 347.

¹⁴³ John Weever had honoured Shakespeare with a poem in his 1598 *Epigrammes*, entitled *Ad Gulielmum Shakespear where Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, and Romeo and Juliet, are praised*.

¹⁴⁴ *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (Cambridge University Press, 1869), I.

when he wrote: “The monument was erected before 1623, for it is mentioned by Leonard Digges in some verses prefixed to the First Folio; and it was executed by Gerard Johnson, an eminent sculptor of that period.”¹⁴⁵

To this point in the investigation, all references are hanging upon what Digges mentioned in his Eulogy, as opposed to eyewitness accounts of seeing the monument. Let us come now to two references from the year 1634: The first is from an entry found in a diary of a Lieutenant Hammond, dated September 9, 1634.

In that days' travel we came by Stratford-upon-Avon, where in the church in that town there are some monuments which church was built by Archbishop Stratford; those worth observing and of which we took notice were these: A neat monument of that famous English poet, Mr. William Shakespere, who was born here. And one of an old gentleman, a batchelor, Mr. Combe, upon whose name, the said poet, did merrily fan up some witty and facetious verses, which time would not give us leave to sack up.

*A Relation of a Short Survey of the Western Counties*¹⁴⁶

This diary entry is the first definite allusion to a “neat monument” already constructed and viewed by the public, only eleven years after the publication of the First Folio and two years after the Second Folio in 1632. The entry is found in E. K. Chambers’s *William Shakespeare* published in 1930,¹⁴⁷ which leads to the original entry written by Leopold Legg (1877–1962) who was a historian. Legg’s book is entitled: “A relation of a short survey of the western counties, made by a Lieutenant of the military company in Norwich in 1635.” According to Legg, he retrieved the diary entry from the Lansdowne MS.,¹⁴⁸ that contemplated the “relation of a short survey of the Western counties, observed in a seven week journey, that began at Norwich and then into the West, on Thursday, August 4, 1635. Entries were written by the Lieutenant, the Captain and Ancient of the Military Company in Norwich who made that journey into the North the year before. The entries are short surveys of the western countries in which is briefly described the cities, corporations, castles, and some other remarkable[sic] in them observed in a seven weeks’ journey.”

There is no reason not to take for granted Lieutenant Hammond’s diary entry, and that he saw a “neat monument” of Shakespere’s on September 9, 1634. There is no motive for this military person to state an exaggeration at the time he wrote this. If we also keep under consideration John Weever’s entry of 1631, when he writes about the inscription from the gravestone, we may not be far wrong to conclude for now, that the “Stratford Moniment” Leonard Digges was alluding to, was already erected by 1634. But when exactly the effigy was constructed, there is no definite proof found. Neither can it be conjectured that the monument was constructed prior to 1634 as Fripp does (mentioned earlier) just to coincide with Leonard Digges’s Eulogy

¹⁴⁵ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847), 288.

¹⁴⁶ Leopold G. W. Legg: Made by a Lieutenant of the Military Company in Norwich in 1635 (Camden Society: Camden Miscellany 16, 3rd Series, 1936).

¹⁴⁷ Vol. II. 242.

¹⁴⁸ (213 ff. 351–384).

of 1623 in the First Folio. However, the year 1634 is a year that such a structure was already created, and for the sake of argument, this would justify Digges's Eulogy to the Second Folio printed in 1632, but not to his Eulogy in the First Folio (1623). Possibly critics and lovers of Shakespeare were demanding in those days to see their Bard's monument that Digges was alluding to, and an effigy was constructed by 1634. Sly mannerisms if this were done. But, to strengthen this conclusion (that the monument was up and viewed by 1634 to coincide with the Second Folio, and did not exist when Digges wrote his Eulogy in the First Folio), is from the next reference, not in words but with sketch.

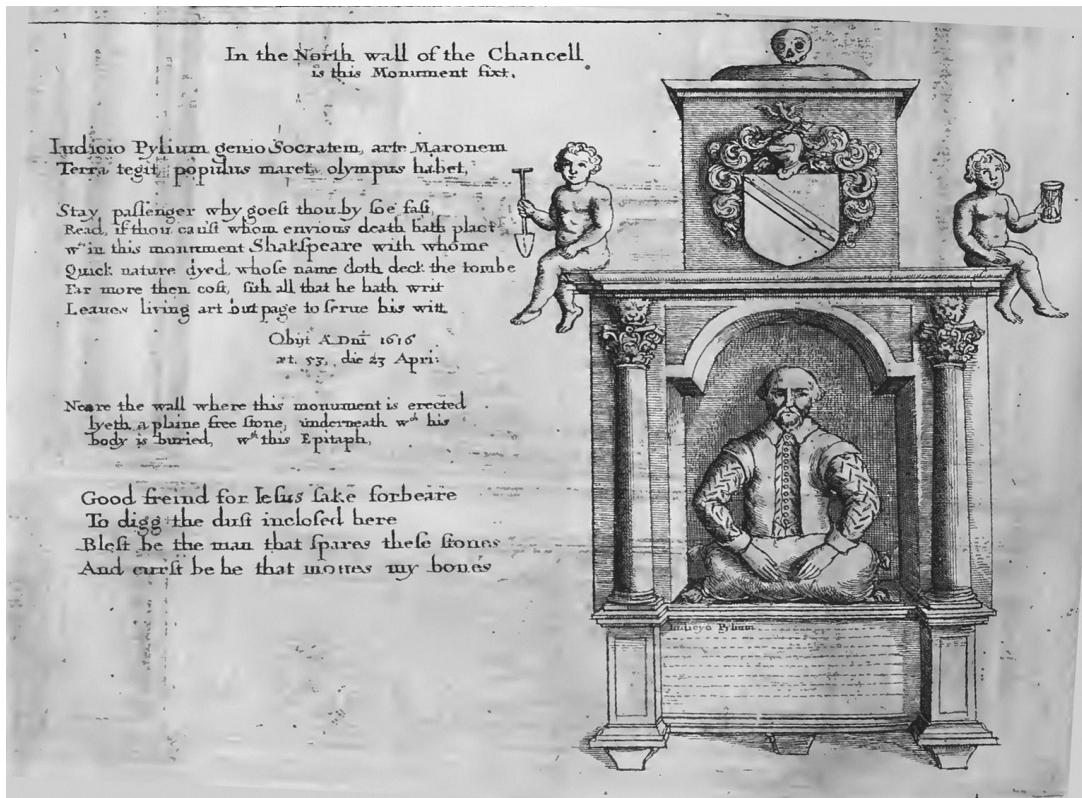


Figure 9: Wenceslas Hollar's sketch from
Sir William Dugdale's *Warwickshire Antiquities* (1656)

Sir William Dugdale, upon his alleged visit to Warwickshire in July 4, 1634, created a simple sketch of the “Stratford Moniment” that was later improved by the engraver, Wenceslas Hollar, and inserted into Dugdale’s *Antiquities* (1656)¹⁴⁹ a mere twenty year delay, due to the Civil War. This sketch (Figure 9) prevailed as the only published depiction of the effigy. If the sketch was correct or had errors, there were no records to ascertain this, and the sketch remained unmoveable till Rowe’s edition in 1709.

It should be noticed that no witness accounts, previously given, mention if the effigy was coloured or not; but Halliwell-Phillipps ascertains that “it was originally coloured, the eyes

¹⁴⁹ London: Thomas Warren, 1656, 1st Ed.

being represented as light hazel, the hair and beard auburn, the dress a scarlet doublet, over which was a loose black gown without sleeves.”¹⁵⁰ Surely the biographer was referring to some sketch he had seen that had passed down to him from Pope’s edition, or even later, because Dugdale publishes his sketch in black and white, and does not mention any colours on the effigy. And this is corroborated by Ingleby’s statements, that the effigy was not originally coloured, as Halliwell-Phillipps states, but the colours were “put on in 1748 by John Hall, the limner of Stratford, and which reappeared on the removal, by Collins, of Malone’s white paint.”¹⁵¹

Dugdale’s *Antiquities* (where the above-mentioned sketch can be found) was a compiled work of antiquaries with illustrations taken from records, ledger books, manuscripts, and charters with depictions of tombs and Coats-of-Arms of Warwickshire. Under the subtitle *Stratford-super-Avon* Dugdale adds this statement: “One thing more, in reference to this ancient Town is observable, that it gave birth and sepulture to our late famous Poet Will. Shakespeare, who’s Monument I have inserted in my discourse of the church.” In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Dugdale is indexed as an English antiquary, who was born near Coleshill in Warwickshire, from an old Lancashire family.¹⁵²

In 1641, when Sir Christopher Hatton foresaw the war, he dreaded the ruin and spoliation of the church; as a consequence, he commissioned the antiquary to make exact drafts of all the monuments in Westminster Abbey and the principal churches in England. However, from Dugdale’s personal correspondence, it seems he conceived the idea of this work around 1636, which was five years prior to Sir Hatton’s commission, and two years after his first sketch of the Shakespere effigy. By the year 1638, Dugdale had already obtained and collected much information, as we read from an entry in his diary: “I have extracted all that concern Warwickshire out of Sir Christopher Hatton’s books, which are the epitome of all Patent Roles of the Tower, and most of Charter Roles there.”¹⁵³ No other extracts from this diary (written from 1642 to 1686) give further information to Dugdale’s visit to Warwickshire. His correspondence begins much earlier in 1635, and his Almanacs for the years 1634 and 1654, when he was in Stratford, are wanting. What Dugdale writes, “I have extracted all that concern Warwickshire out of Sir Christopher Hatton’s books,” gives one to ponder if he even went to Warwickshire; instead, he satisfied himself from Hatton’s books.

The price of Dugdale’s volume, according to its editor, appears to have been “£1. 5 and in 1669, several instances occur of its selling for £1. 10.” The destructive fire of London (1666) having increased its scarcity had Dugdale in 1670 giving £1. 15 for a copy to accommodate a friend.¹⁵⁴ A second edition came out in two volumes in 1730, “the whole revised, augmented, and continued down to this present time by William Thomas sometime Rector of Exhall, in the same County.”

¹⁵⁰ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847), 288.

¹⁵¹ Shakespeare: The Man & the Book (London: Trübner & Co., 1877), Vol. I.

¹⁵² 11th Ed (1910–1911).

¹⁵³ William Hamper, Life of Sir William Dugdale (London: Thomas Pavison, 1826).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.,

One may ask: Did Dugdale incorrectly sketch his early drawing of the effigy? Being he was human, yes, he could have, and of some errors he was accused of, will now be given.

Malone corrects the author Theobald when the latter states Shakespere's first child, Susanna, had a monument in memorial for her death in 1649: "Mr. Theobald was mistaken in supposing that a monument was erected to her in the church of Stratford. There is no memorial there in honour of either our poet's wife or daughter, except flat tombstones, by which, however, the time of their respective deaths is ascertained. His daughter, Susanna, died, not on July 2, but July 11, 1649. Theobald was led into this error by Dugdale."

Stopes also records an error: "Now Dugdale, with all his perfections, occasionally makes mistakes. He either mistook Asteley for Shakespeare, or another Shakespeare prioress intervened between the two that he mentions. The Guild of Knowle Records give unimpeachable testimony as to the existent date of the Prioress, Isabella Shakespeare."¹⁵⁵

Let us hear what the editor said, who was Dr. William Thomas, when he edited the second edition of Dugdale's *Warwickshire* in 1730, where he complained that he found to his "great surprise (when his own work was finished) that the account which Sir William Dugdale had given of certain parishes was very imperfect." A Register was confused, another wholly omitted, others reversed, also epitaphs and Coats-of-Arms in churches passed over; but the editor excuses Dugdale by saying that they were done by persons he hired "who took them down as they pleased themselves to spare their own pains." In the same year (1730) a vitriolic book was published by Charles Hornby attacking Dugdale's very numerous mistakes in a work, entitled: *Baronage of England* that was published in 1675.

It seems Dugdale was not immune to mistakes; logical, since he was human. But if he "mistook Asteley for Shakespeare," as Stopes recalls, could he have drawn a monument of Asteley for Shakespeare's? If Dugdale hired others to sketch "to spare their own pains," as the editor Thomas writes, could these people have sketched the "Stratford Moniment" wrongly? Although we shall return to these questions for answers, we need to move to the engraver Wenceslas Hollar, who improved Dugdale's alleged initial sketch of 1634.

Hollar was born at Prague in 1607. He was of an ancient family, well-educated by his parents, with the intention of bringing him up to the profession of law; but not liking that profession, and the civil commotions of his country breaking out, by which his family was plundered of everything at the taking of Prague in 1619, he had a choice for drawing, and having taken refuge in Frankfort, he became a pupil of Matthäus Merian. Hollar died in London in 1677, reduced to such a state of poverty, that when in his last illness the bailiffs entered his room to take possession, the bed upon which he lay was the only piece of furniture remaining. His prints are stated to amount to a quantity of 2,733.¹⁵⁶ "I remember he told me," Aubrey says, "that when he first came to England (which was a serene time of peace) that the people, both poor and rich, did look cheerfully, but at his return, he found the countenance of the people all

¹⁵⁵ Shakespeare's Family (London: Elliot Stock, 1901).

¹⁵⁶ George Williamson, Brian's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1904), Vol. III.

changed, melancholy, spiteful, as if bewitched. He was a very friendly good-natured man as could be but shiftless as to the world, and died not rich.”¹⁵⁷



Figure 10: Sir William Dugdale (1605–1686)¹⁵⁸

To sum up, we can say that after the death of the Stratfordian actor in 1616 and not later than Leonard Digges’s written Eulogy in the Second Folio of 1632, and we stress *not* the first Folio of 1623, the “Stratford Moniment” was created. We have no written record of the monument’s exact creation, but we have the diary entry of a Lieutenant Hammond that it was seen on September 9, 1634, and we also have a rough sketch of its existence, supposedly created by Dugdale, from the same year, on July 4. Therefore, there is no doubt that Shakespere’s tombstone was created in 1616, since we have mention to a “threefold, fourfold tomb” from William Basse in 1616, and the gravestone inscription in John Weever’s entry of 1631. As for the “Stratford Moniment,” everything points to a construction near the Second Folio’s publication (1632) as opposed to the First Folio’s publication (1623).

¹⁵⁷ John Aubrey’s Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library.

¹⁵⁸ In Dugdale’s biography, it is said he died from a fever “in his chair” at Blythe Hall.

One may ask for additional proof to strengthen this investigation, and this could be done if written records existed for 1616 (Shakespere's year of death) up to 1623 (Digges's Eulogy). We know of various fires that occurred in Stratford: 1594, 1596, and 1598; also, "in 1614, the greater part of the town was consumed by fire." ¹⁵⁹ These fires however could not have been the cause of destruction of those records; they do not include the years we are interested in, neither does the year of 1588, when a great flood consumed the town. ¹⁶⁰ Probably the fire in 1896 was the cause to destroy Parish-Registers; yet, according to Lee, this fire just destroyed shops and a "little garden on the east side of the birthplace." ¹⁶¹

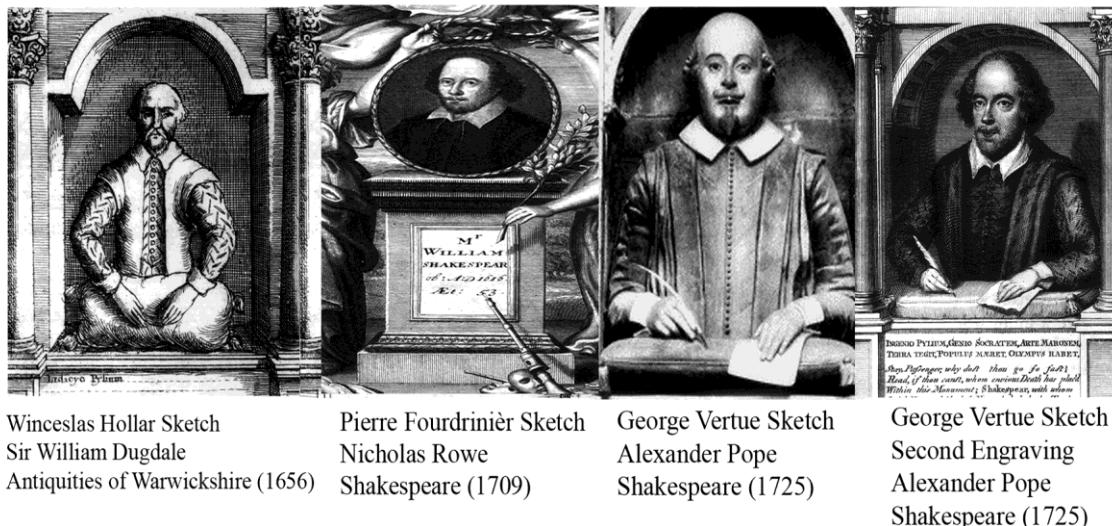


Figure 11: Various sketches of the "Stratford Moniment"

On the contrary, we have ample written records of repairs done to the effigy, and the first record comes from John Ward's Company of Actors who gave a performance of the *Othello* play on September 9, 1746, which was termed as the first Jubilee in Stratford. The receipts of this performance were handed over to the churchwardens to help on the repairs; yet the repairs were not done, for on November 1748, we find Rev. Joseph Greene, ¹⁶² the headmaster of the grammar school, writing to John Ward, the Company manager, apologizing for the delay, asking for his advice in the matter. The Company manager replied on December 3, 1748, saying he intends paying a visit to the town "next summer" and hopes to have the pleasure of seeing the monument of the "Immortal Bard" completely finished. Still, the repairs were not completed till a year after this correspondence, and a total of three years finally elapsed till repairs were concluded.

Who was the person for the preservations and "careful repair" of the colours of the effigy? "John Hall, a painter, was employed for the renovation; but when we look into the history of

¹⁵⁹ Theobald's Preface to Boswell's Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare, (London: 1821), Vol. I.

¹⁶⁰ Sir Sidney Lee, Stratford-on-Avon (London: Seeley & Co., Ltd., 1904), p. 166.

¹⁶¹ Sir Sidney Lee, Alleged Vandalism at Stratford-on-Avon (Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903).

¹⁶² His brother was Richard Greene (1716–1793) who was a surgeon and apothecary of Lichfield.

that renovation, naively put forward by the main supporters of the new theory, and accepted by the blind followers of it, we find that the amount raised from the *Othello* performance was no more than £12. 10s. and that the repairs which were effected after two years of wrangling, are supposed to have resulted in this fine marble monument and carved stone bust for that paltry sum.”¹⁶³ Halliwell-Phillipps states that John Hall was only to restore the thumb and a forefinger “of Shakespeare’s writing hand,” and if that is to be accepted as a fact, then it is pretty clear that the bust in 1746, that was to be worked on by Mr. Hall, was not the same bust as it was represented in Dugdale’s engraving by Hollar, who upgraded the sketch for Dugdale’s *Antiquities* (1656). We say this, because Halliwell-Phillipps talks of “Shakespeare’s writing hand,” and the only sketch that shows the figure using a “writing hand” is that of George Vertue’s sketch in Pope’s 1725 edition. (Figure 11) Halliwell-Phillipps, of course, gives no authority, nor cites any document in support of his statement; he may have been misled by the fact that the finger and thumb of the bust were, as we are told, restored in 1790 by a William Roberts of Oxford, though three years later, in 1793, the bust, together with the effigies, were painted white at the request of Malone, but restored to colour by a Mr. Collins, who prepared for it “a bath of some detergent which entirely took off the whitewash.”¹⁶⁴

Somewhere from Dugdale’s first sketch in 1634, to the improved sketch of Hollar’s in 1656, down to Vertue’s sketches in 1725, changes were made. There is no record of these changes; we have a repair-gap from 1634 to 1725, from an old friend with a new face, one could say, which was a jesting term in Malone’s time regarding the Chandos portrait, since it was touched up so many different ways to represent the likeness of the alleged Bard.

Fairholt declared “the hand of the poet holds a pen, which was long absent from the monument.”¹⁶⁵ Fairholt must have been referring to Vertue’s sketch (1725) as opposed to Dugdale’s that shows no pen. Finally, in 1814, George Bullock had the bust taken down for the purpose of making a mould for a very limited number of casts. The mould was afterwards destroyed, and the casts soon became scarce.

Biographers assume the effigy was ordered by the actor’s son-in-law, Dr. John Hall (d.1635); he was married to Susanna Shakespere, the daughter of the actor. We are also told that Hall was a Puritan, and many of his patients were Roman Catholics; but even “such as hated his religion” were glad to avail themselves of his medical science. Hall called himself “Master of Arts,” but his University is not known, and, although he practiced medicine, he had no medical degree. His case-books begin in 1617 with entries as to William (Lord Compton), who became the Earl of Northampton. In the *Dictionary of National Biography*, there is an entry on how “Dr. John Hall died November 25, 1635, and was buried the next day in the chancel of the parish church. The Register describes him as *medicus peritissimus*. His tomb bears a Latin inscription. Farr attributes to Hall some chief work with copies extremely rare, published in 1565, under the title of “The Court of Virtue: Containing many Holy or Spiritual Songs, Sonnettes, Psalms, Ballets, and short sentences, as well of Holy Scripture as others, with

¹⁶³ M. H. Spielmann. Comparative Study of the Droeshout Portrait & Stratford Monument (London: Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press, 1924).

¹⁶⁴ H. James Friswell, Life Portraits of Shakespeare (London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1864).

¹⁶⁵ F. W. Fairholt, and Washington Irving, Shakespeare’s Home (London: Chapman & Hall, 1877).

Musical Notes.”¹⁶⁶ By a nuncupative Will & Testament, Hall left a house in London to his wife, a house at Acton and a meadow to his daughter and his study of books and his manuscripts to his son-in-law, Thomas Nash. His manuscripts were to be burnt or treated as the legatee pleased. Nothing is now known of them, and it has been conjectured, “they included manuscripts of Shakespeare’s, which Hall and his wife, as residuary legatees, doubtless inherited in 1616.”¹⁶⁷

The Will of Dr. John Hall
Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury
Testcuiuentum nuncupativum Johannis Hall.
November 25, 1635.

The last Will and Testament nuncupative of John Hall of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, Gent., made and declared the five and twentieth of November, 1635:

Imprimis, I give unto my wife my house in London.

Item, I give unto my daughter Nash my house in Acton.

Item, I give unto my daughter Nash my meadow.

Item, I give my goods and money unto my wife and my daughter Nash, to be equally divided between them.

Item, concerning my study of books, I leave them, to you my son Nash, to dispose of them as you see good. As for my manuscripts, I would have given them to Mr. Boles, if he had been here; but forasmuch as he is not here present, you may, son Nash, burn them, or do with them what you please.

Witnesses hereunto: Thomas Nash
 Simon Trapp

Beside Hall’s guidance, the effigy was also assumed to be “under the supervision of Shakespeare’s widow and daughters, amidst his friends and kinsfolk, who knew him as a man, not as an actor, and they had it coloured, so that the likeness, if at all good, should have been much more striking than the work of the engraver.”¹⁶⁸ We have no written record of this conjecture, though it is also believed by Robert Wheller: “The exact time of the erection of this monument is now unknown; but it was probably done by his [Shakespere’s] executor, Dr. John Hall, or relation, at a time when his features were perfectly fresh in everyone’s memory, or perhaps with the assistance of an original picture, if any such one ever existed. It is evident however from some verses made by Leonard Digges, a contemporary of our poet, that it was erected before the year 1623.”¹⁶⁹

Again, Digges’s sidetracking Eulogy takes center stage in theories and assumptions on when the monument should have been created. Wheller’s statement holds some point of interest, but then it is questionable why we have no written records, except those references previously

¹⁶⁶ Select Poetry (1845), Vol. I.

¹⁶⁷ (a) Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1890), Vol. XXIV. 70; (b) J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Outlines, Vol. II. 61.

¹⁶⁸ C. C. Stopes, Shakespeare’s Environment (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1918), 107.

¹⁶⁹ History and Antiquities of Stratford-on-Avon (Stratford-upon-Avon Press: J. Ward, 1806).

given, that the monument was constructed near the Second Folio publication (1632); and if Dugdale's sketch is tracked down from the very first time it was seen by the public (1656) to the very next instance, which would be in Pope's edition (1725), we may notice extreme differences. (Figure 11) Stopes argued the bust was materially altered in the year 1748, when the sculptor employed to repair and improve the monument, and had probably reconstructed the face altogether.¹⁷⁰ Her reference comes from discovering a collection of manuscripts, entitled: *The Wheller Collection*, being papers that belonged to the Rev. Joseph Greene, written in September 1746, and Mr. Greenwood's letter is of interest on the same subject.

Written From Serjeant's Inn Fleet St., E.C.

6th July, 1912.

Dear Sir:

In yesterday's *Morning Post* Mr. Andrew Lang has an article under the above title in which I notice your name is mentioned. In case you may think of sending a reply I would suggest as an important point for your consideration that Mr. Lang omitted to deal with perhaps the most important feature of the revelations unearthed by Mrs. Stopes from *The Wheller Collection* at Stratford. This is that the Rev. Mr. Kenwick, the then vicar and who may be regarded as perfectly disinterested, contended for two years with the Rev. Joseph Greene, the Master of the Free school, the former insisting upon the extremely important and significant point that John Hall, limner, the person entrusted with the so-called 'restoration' in 1748/9, should be tied down by express instructions in writing signed by him, upon due compliance with which his pay was to depend, 'that the monument shall become as like as possible to what it was when first erected.'

Greene strenuously opposed the honest vicar and ultimately unfortunately carried his point, so that no such writing was signed by Hall, and he and Greene were in consequence left to do as they pleased with the monument. It is quite impossible to believe that Kenwick would have quarrelled for two years with an important person in his congregation over such a question as the mere restoration of a broken finger; and moreover the effect of the work done was to totally destroy the evident allegorical meaning of the original design as given by Dugdale, which was doubtless what Greene desired.

It is extremely likely that the famous [John] Jordan [forger] was a pupil of Greene's at the Free-school, and he may even have drawn his ideas with regard to forgery from this transaction, and followed the example set by his master. At all events if we may rely upon Dugdale the present monument may be regarded as the first Shakespearian forgery.

Yours Faithfully,

W. Lansdon Goldsworthy.

G. G. Greenwood, Esq., M.P.

P.S. *It is a curious and sinister fact that Dugdale and The Wheller Collection should have been successfully boycotted by all Shakespearians prior to Mrs. Stopes.*

Chapman was mind boggled when he wrote how "the practice of substituting 'poet' for the name Shakespere of Stratford by the Stratfordians in their writings when referring to the

¹⁷⁰ The "Monthly Review" (1904).

Stratford miscellaneous documents, Greene's diary, the Wheller papers, contained in the Stratford archives, is as reprehensible as was the amplifications of Jordan and the fabrications of Steevens in a vain attempt to prove a Stratfordian authorship. No Stratford record contemporaneous with him contains a reference to Shakespere as a poet or writer.”¹⁷¹

The young forger Ireland, in his *Confessions* (1805) states that he had been down taking drawings from various tombs in Stratford, and “greatly reprehended the folly of having coloured the face and dress of the bust of Shakespeare, which was intended to beautify it, whereas it would have been much more preferable to have left the stone of the proper colour.” He applied for permission to “take a plaster-cast from the bust as Malone had done,” but the necessary delay in petitioning the Corporation for permission made him give up the idea. In Ireland’s sketch of the bust, Shakespere is presented as an eighteenth century man, “moustache turned up, a pen in one hand, paper in the other, and the cushion like a desk.”¹⁷²

Pope’s first and second edition engravings, by George Vertue (1684–1756), varies of the monument that was sketched in Dugdale’s time. (Figure 9) The change is great. Vertue evidently added the Chandos head upon the body of this effigy, when he sketched his second variation. We may ask why he would do that; why even conceive to change the sketch that came down from Dugdale in 1634 and in 1656, unless Vertue had seen the effigy himself, and noticed it was not as Dugdale had depicted it to be.

We learn through Stopes that “in Pope’s edition of 1725 we find a remarkable variation. Vertue did not go to Stratford but to Nicholas Rowe for his copy. Finding it so very inartistic, he improved the monument, making the little angels light-bearers rather than bearers of spade and hour-glass, and instead of the bust he gives a composition from the Chandos portrait, altering the arms and hands and adding a cloak, pen, paper, and desk. It retains, however, the drooping moustache and slashed sleeves.”¹⁷³ If what Stopes says is true, we need to find from whom Rowe got his copy. He published his first *Life on Shakespeare* in 1709, which would have made Vertue at the age of twenty-five; Rowe’s second edition came out in 1714 (four years before his death); the engraver would then have been at the age of thirty. Vertue inserted his updated sketch in Pope’s work in 1725, so the engraver must have acquired his “copy” between 1708 to 1714. We state 1708, as the possible beginning of Vertue’s hunt for a “copy,” for two reasons: (1) It was about this time we have first notice of alleged portraits and images coming in that are assumed to be the Bard’s face, and (2) it was one year prior Rowe’s first edition that contained a biography on Shakespeare.

Mr. George Greenwood asks: “Are we not, then, driven to this conclusion, that either the bust has been materially altered since the date of Dugdale’s drawing, or the great antiquary must deliberately (but for no reason that can be suggested) have presented his readers with a false picture of it? Is it possible to absolve Sir William Dugdale of such gross inaccuracy as almost

¹⁷¹ Shakespeare: The Personal Phase (California: Giles Publishing, 1920).

¹⁷² C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare’s Environment* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914).

¹⁷³ The “Monthly Review” (1904).

amounts to fraud? Is it possible that the central figure was in his time as he drew it, and as he had it engraved? *C'est là la question.*”¹⁷⁴

Again, we may ask where Rowe got his copy from to give to the artist Vertue, as Stopes tells us. There is a reference telling us where Rowe got his copy from, but it comes from an anonymous author who wrote in his *Imperfect Hints towards a New Edition of Shakespeare* published in 1782: “The first prints ever published from the page of Shakespeare, were the miserable designs of Fourdrinièr, for the edition by Rowe, in 1709. To these succeeded the duodecimo edition of Pope and Sewell, in 1728, with cuts by Fourdrinièr; I have not seen this edition; but I have reason to believe the cuts are nothing more than facsimiles of those in Rowe’s edition (with some trifling alterations in some of them) and with the substitution of some plates by Du Guernier.”¹⁷⁵

We find a second reference from George Steevens and Dr. Johnson telling us Rowe’s edition (1709) sketch was created by Michael Vandergucht (or van Der Gucht) who possessed some copy from Betterton.¹⁷⁶ So, it seems that Rowe got a copy of his representation of the alleged Bard either from Pierre Fourdrinièr, or from Michael Vandergucht; it is apparent he did not get it from Dugdale’s alleged authentic sketch, and Rowe definitely did not go to Stratford to witness or draw the effigy himself; if remembered, his informers were several persons, who assumedly had visited Warwickshire.

To a short biography of the engraver Michael Vandergucht, he was born in 1660 in Antwerp and studied engraving there under Philibert Boultats, the leading member of a large family of engravers. Vandergucht, in 1673, was admitted to the guild of St. Luke in that city, then came to London about 1690, and was largely employed in engraving title-pages, portraits, and other illustrations for the booksellers, all done with the burin. At the age of sixty-five, he died in Bloomsbury on October 16, 1725, and was buried in St. Giles’s churchyard. Among Vandergucht’s pupils, was George Vertue who was born in the parish of St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields in 1684. At the age of thirteen (1697) he was placed with a Frenchman who engraved Coats-of-Arms on plate, and had the chief business of London, though later returned to his own country, after young Vertue had served with him about three or four years up to 1701. Returned to his parents, Vertue gave himself entirely to the study of drawing for two years till 1703, and then entered into an engagement with Michael Vandergucht for three more years till 1706, engraving copper-plates. The University of Oxford employed Vertue for many years to engrave the headings to their Almanacs, and in 1730, his work appeared with twelve heads of poets. He died, as he had lived, in the Roman Catholic faith, on July 24, 1756, and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.¹⁷⁷

To a short biography of Pierre Fourdrinièr, we learn that he was a French engraver, who flourished for upwards of thirty years in London after being a pupil of Bernard Picart at Amsterdam for six years, then coming to England in 1720. Other authorities mention a Paul

¹⁷⁴ The Stratford Bust & The Droeshout Engraving (London: Cecil Palmer, 1925).

¹⁷⁵ Anonymous, (London: The Logographic Press, 1782), viii.

¹⁷⁶ Plays of Shakspeare (London: J. Nichols & Son, 1813).

¹⁷⁷ George Williamson, Brian’s Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1919), Vol. V.

Fourdrinièr as engraver of some various works, and he has been identified with a Paul Fourdrinièr who was of the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, who died in January or February 1758.¹⁷⁸

Returning to the “Stratford Moniment,” according to Dugdale, it was constructed by Garratt Janssen or Gerard Johnson, the Anglo-Flemish sculptor of Southwark, whose father had been resident in London since 1567. This attribution is only given by Dugdale himself, and no other evidence of Gerard Johnson’s authorship exists. Here is how Dugdale records this hypothesis: “1653. *At the beginning of the book.* Shakespeare and John Combe’s Monument, at Stratford-super-Avon, made by one Gerard Johnson.”¹⁷⁹

Dugdale’s updated sketch of 1656, Halliwell-Phillipps contributes it to Hollar as an authenticated reference from Dugdale himself. However, Spielmann had an opinion this engraving is not by Hollar but by his assistant, Haywood,¹⁸⁰ and Dr. Whitaker states, though Dugdale’s “scrupulous accuracy, united with stubborn integrity cannot be wrong, his reputation has elevated his *Antiquities of Warwickshire* to the rank of legal evidence.”

One can only remember James Spedding’s saying, and how his advice should be brought in when we are faced with such fragile circumstances: “When a thing is asserted as a fact, always ask who first reported it, and what means he had of knowing the truth.”¹⁸¹

The pedigree of the Chandos portrait, supposed to have been depicted on the sketches of Vertue for Pope’s edition in 1725, came to public attention in the seventeenth century. It was generally considered as the most authentic portrait of the Bard, even though by 1793 forgeries on portraits of the Bard was at its peak, as we see from the “European Magazine” of December 1793: “The reader may observe that contrary to former usage, no head of Shakespeare is prefixed to the present edition (1793) of his plays. The undisguised fact is this: the only portrait of him that even pretends to authenticity, by means of injudicious cleaning, or some other accident, has become little better, than the shadow of a shade.” By this time (1793) Vertue’s portraits were over-praised on account of their “reliability,” and six different heads of Shakespeare were engraved by him. Granger (author) writes: “It has been said, there never was an original portrait of Shakespeare, but that Sir Thomas Clarges, after his death, caused a portrait to be drawn for him, from a person who nearly resembled him; hence the Chandos portrait.”¹⁸² Before granting this statement any correctness, we learnt that Granger was an entertaining writer and great collector of anecdotes, but not always very scrupulous in inquiring into the authenticity of the information which he gave. An anonymous writer in the “Gentleman’s Magazine” for August 1759, writes, though Granger had boldly affirmed the Chandos portrait was genuine as an absolute fact, “being afterwards publicly called upon to

¹⁷⁸ (a) George Williamson, Brian’s Dictionary of Painters and Engravers, (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1919), Vol. II; (b) Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1890), Vol. XX.

¹⁷⁹ William Hamper, Life of Sir William Dugdale (London: Thomas Pavison, 1826), 99.

¹⁸⁰ A Comparative Study of the Droeshout Portrait and the Stratford Monument (London: Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press, 1924).

¹⁸¹ James Spedding (1808–1881). English author, chiefly known as the editor of the *Works* of Francis Bacon.

¹⁸² Granger’s Biographical History, Vol. I. 259.

produce his authority never produced any. There is the strongest reason to presume the Chandos portrait a forgery.”

The task of researching Sir Thomas Clarges, who allegedly “caused a portrait to be drawn for him, from a person who nearly resembled him; hence the Chandos portrait,” was fruitless. Whatever is understood from Granger’s statement here, we searched to find a portrait of Clarges, but to no avail. This was not surprising.

Thomas Clarges was the brother of the Duchess of Albemarle, who married General Monk in 1652 at the church of St. George, Southwark. Aubrey writes, that the Duchess “was not at all handsome nor cleanly,” and that she was a seamstress to Monk when he was imprisoned in the Tower. She died a few days after the Duke, and is interred by his side in Henry the Seventh’s Chapel, Westminster Abbey. The Duke was succeeded by his son, Christopher, who married Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, grand-daughter of the Duke of Newcastle, and died childless.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that there is some uncertainty about Clarges’s origin and that Aubrey had called his father a blacksmith. “Clarges is commonly referred to as Dr. Clarges during the earlier part of his career and appears to have practiced as a medical man. Hearne says he was an apothecary.”¹⁸³ Anthony à Wood writes: “The son of Sir Thomas Clarges (was admitted) a gentleman commoner of Merton College, which Sir Thomas was an apprentice of old [John] Williams, [d.1641] an apothecary in St. Mary’s Parish, Oxon. He was brother to the Duchess of Albemarle, both children of Clarges, a blacksmith in Drury Lane, London.”¹⁸⁴ Clarges’s apprenticeship to Williams must have been some time before 1634, for in that year he started another apprenticeship.

The records of the Merchant Taylors’ Company of London show that in January of that year “Thomas Clargin, son of John Clargin of London,” was apprenticed for seven years to Charles Wallis. He was made a freeman of that Company on March 2, 1641. This apprenticeship may have been a formal or nominal one, as, on January 21 of that year the Society of Apothecaries Court Minutes record that “Michael Grygough, Doctor Cadymen’s man, and Thomas Clarges, an unlawful worker, both live at Mrs. Crosse’s;” and on May 6, 1642, “Thomas Clargin is admonished and forbidden to set up shop within the precincts of this Company under the penalties of the Charter & Ordinances of this company.” The admonition was repeated on July 29.¹⁸⁵ The “Mrs Crosse” mentioned, was Anne Crosse, widow of Thomas Crosse, who was bound to William Clarke, a Charter Member of the society, and freed in 1628. He went on a herb rising excursion with the famous apothecary-botanist Thomas Johnson in 1629 and his address was the Strand in the list of members of the Society in 1640. He died in the latter year leaving a considerable fortune to Anne. Shortly after his death she married the physician Sir Thomas Cademan, her husband’s friend, with whom he had served in the army medical services. On Cademan’s death in 1651, Anne married our very own Sir William D’Avenant,

¹⁸³ (a) Stephens and Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith Elder & Co., 1882), Vol. IV. 398, 399;
(b) J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses* (London: Oxford University Press, 1891), Vol I. 278.

¹⁸⁴ Clark, *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood (1664–81)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), Vol II. 215.

¹⁸⁵ Society of Apothecaries. Court Minute Books. Guildhall Library, subsequently SA Mins. Ms. 8200/1, 399, 404, 406, 446/7, 449.

playwright-manager and Poet-Laureate, who had used the Apothecaries Hall for the rehearsal of some of his plays.

It seems that the Stratford “Bard” is always bumping into these people that we initially came across in Rowe’s biography of Shakespeare. To conclude, Anne Crosse’s son, Thomas Cross, became D’Avenant’s secretary. Another son, Paul Crosse, was admitted to the Society by Patrimony on April 7, 1667, on condition “that he bind not apprentice nor exercise the trade nor do any prejudice to the profession.”¹⁸⁶ Anne evidently carried on her husband’s pharmacy for some years after his death. Clarges appears to have been Cademan’s private apothecary so it was natural that he should work for his widow.

And after investigating such a relationship of the Clarges with the Crosses, who is to tell us that Thomas Clarges did not (unintentionally) believe the vagabond myths that were coming from D’Avenant on how the immortal bard was the Stratfordian actor? Would Clarges not have “caused a portrait to be drawn for him, from a person who nearly resembled him; hence the Chandos portrait,” as Granger tells us? The Chandos portrait could have been commissioned to be framed by the painter, Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), because in the National Portrait Gallery, there is a text telling us how Gainsborough had been commissioned to have portraits framed; those being Richard Stevens in 1762 and 1768, Clement Tudway in 1773, and our man, Sir Thomas Clarges in 1778. We shall add Ben Jonson’s famous quotation: “Mingle no matter of doubtful with the simplicity of truth.”¹⁸⁷

From various biographers, the Chandos portrait was believed to be the work of Richard Burbage, the play-actor, and a friend to the Stratford actor. However, Vertue gave a very different pedigree of the portrait saying that it was painted by “one Taylor a player, contemporary with Shakespere and his intimate friend.” Without substantial evidence who the painter was, it is hard to believe that this would have been a good enough excuse for the engraver to completely change Dugdale’s sketch of 1634 and the Hollar sketch of 1656; possibly either sketch could be termed false. It is a matter of who one wishes to support. Regardless, the pedigree of the portrait (as coming from Vertue) was so believed at the time, that in the National Portrait Gallery catalogue it was so written: “The Chandos Shakespeare was the property of John Taylor the player by whom or by Richard Burbage it was painted. The picture was left by the former in his will, to Sir William D’Avenant. After his death it was bought by Betterton the actor, upon whose decease Mr. Keck, of the Temple, purchased it for forty guineas, from whom it was inherited by Mr. Nicholls, of Michenden House, Southgate in Middlesex, whose only daughter married James, Marquis of Caernarvon, afterwards Duke of Chandos, father to Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham.”

From the Gallery Catalogue, we see familiar names we met earlier from Rowe’s time; the same people who were feeding their stories to create a pseudo-biography of Shakespeare as we read earlier. There seems to be some problem with the Chandos portrait pedigree that the Gallery Catalogue was giving, which was given to them by Vertue. It states that the “Chandos

¹⁸⁶ SA Mins Ms 8200/2:107.

¹⁸⁷ Discoveries: De Shakespeare nostrati (1641).

Shakespeare was the property of John Taylor the player.” There was no actor by the name of John Taylor; the actor was called Joseph Taylor who was one of the sources of Thomas Betterton’s material that was being given to Rowe to create his pseudo-biography. There was however a painter called John Taylor, and in the Picture Gallery at Oxford are two portraits of his, one is of the Water-poet, with the words: “John Taylor pinx 1655.”¹⁸⁸

If Vertue and the officials of the National Portrait Gallery made such a grave error in their conclusions of the Chandos portrait pedigree, which seems that they did, then the portrait in question can definitely be recorded a spurious. Whatever the case may be, the effigy, as represented by Dugdale in 1656, (never mind the alleged original sketch of it in 1634), is so definitely different from that which we see through various sketches that have come down to us, that unless the monument had been materially altered and reconstructed since his time, to which we have no recorded evidence, then this antiquary must be held responsible for what is really no better than a fraud upon the public of his day, and upon all readers of his book who put trust and confidence in him.

Andrew Lang had said, “Sir William Dugdale’s engraving is not a correct copy of any genuine Jacobean work of art. The gloomy hypochondriac or lunatic, clasping a cushion to his abdomen, cannot, by any possibility, represent the original bust of Shakespeare.” And in Aubrey’s manuscripts (Bodleian Library), he tells us that “Mr. William Shakespeare, Poet, in his monument in the church at Stratford upon Avon his figure is thus: A tawny satin doublet, I think, pinked: and over that a black gown. The sleeves of the gown do not cover the arms, but hang loose behind.”

If much blame can be put upon Dugdale’s shoulders, so much can also be put upon the shoulders of those artists that came after, and continue to come, with their parades of alleged portraits depicting Shakespeare. On April 23, 1835, the Shakespearean Committee Room announced that “the Shakespearean Club of Stratford-upon-Avon have long beheld with regret, the disfigurement of the bust and monument of Shakespeare, and the neglected condition of the interior of the chancel which contains that monument and his grave.” Soon enough, a new society formed for the renovation and restoration of the monument, bust, and chancel, with John Britton as Honorary Secretary sending out a prospectus stating: “A small and comparatively trifling tomb was raised to the memory of Shakespeare, immediately after his death; but it failed to attract anything like critical or literary notice until the time of Malone.”

¹⁸⁸ There is a little journey of delight in Linklater’s *Ben Jonson and King James* (1931): “When Ben Jonson made known his intention of walking there, [to Scotland to visit Drummond in 1618,] there was incredulity and mirth in London; for the idea of travelling for pleasure, at least in one’s own country, was yet a stranger, and Ben was forty-six years old and weighed nearly twenty stone. [Francis] Bacon, with a judicious frown, said he loved not to see poesie go on other feet than poetical dactyl and spondee, a hilarious scheme grew, it appears, to caricature Ben’s journey by sending after him, also on foot, John Taylor the Water-poet, a cheerful vociferous drunken versifier who had forsaken his trade of rowing a Thames ferry to write bundling rhymes.” Regarding that poetical dactyl and spondee, Alexander Adam, in his *Rudiments of Latin and English Grammar* (1820) explained it: “The Pentameter verse consists of five feet. Of these the two final are either dactyles or spondees; the third always a spondee; and the fourth and fifth an anapaestus.”

From the evidence that surfaced through this investigation, we tend to differ with what Britton wrote, that any such effigy was constructed “to the memory of Shakespeare.” All witness accounts are toward 1632 and onwards in seeing the “Stratford Moniment.” Not one account is found if someone saw the monument that would coincide with the First Folio’s publication. We must confess that Leonard Digges’s Eulogy must be reconsidered if being an authentic statement.

III

Edmond Malone (1741–1812)

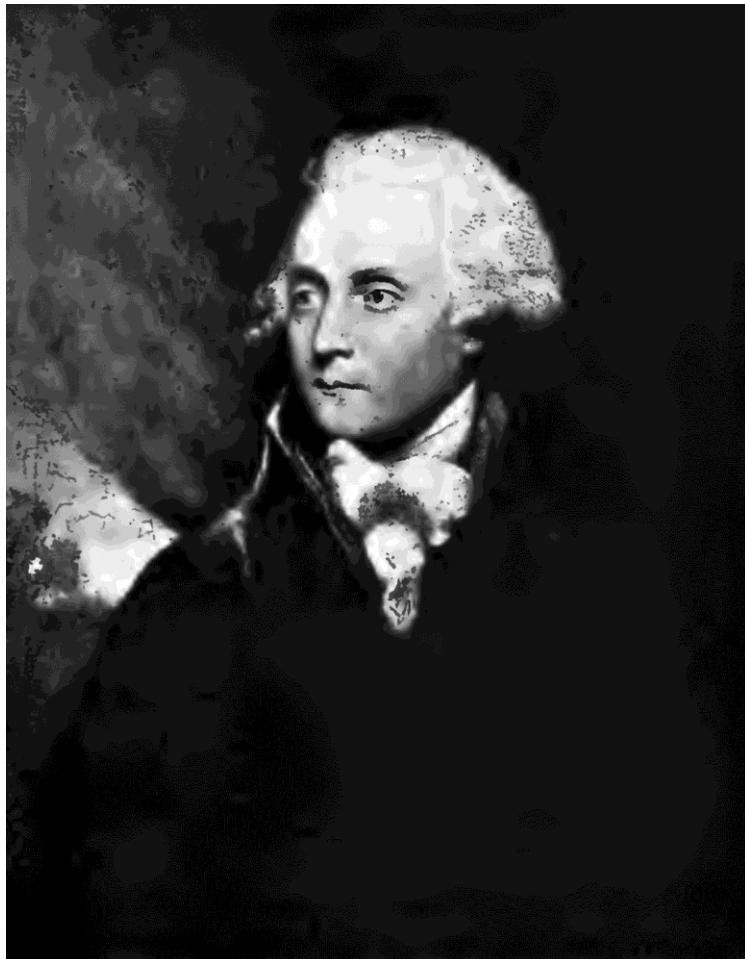


Figure 12: Edmond Malone (1741–1812)
Painted by J. Reynolds (c.1774)

Our next biographer is Edmond Malone. Born in Dublin, Malone was from an Irish family of the “highest antiquity,”¹⁸⁹ says James Boswell in his *Biographical Memoire*, “and all his immediate predecessors were distinguished men.”¹⁹⁰ Having been called to the Irish Bar in 1700, Malone became one of the most eminent barristers that have ever appeared in that country. Following a literary career, he became a unique critic, with the careful and sensible contributions to the study of Shakespeare, of whose works he published a valuable edition in November 1790; an edition where he gives a more concise and down-to-earth account of Shakespeare’s life than Rowe or Lee. Though many conjectures still remain, Malone does his best to analyze these conjectures so some sensible form of genealogy is created. He had written of Rowe’s biography on Shakespeare: “It is somewhat remarkable, that in Rowe’s *Life*

¹⁸⁹ See Archdall’s Peerage of Ireland, Vol. VII.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

of our author, there are not more than eleven facts mentioned; and of these, on a critical examination, eight will be found to be false."

Malone also wrote the lives of Dryden and others, and was the friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson; their introduction made by one of their friends of the Southwell family, younger brother of the Peer of that name, whose manners Johnson so highly commended for "freedom from insolence." Malone also became friends with Goldsmith, Joshua Reynolds (d.1792) and Edmund Burke. Finally, Malone is famously known to have aided in the detection of the "Rowley" forgeries of Chatterton, and the Shakespeare ones of Ireland.¹⁹¹

With Malone, we conclude the introducers of Shakespere, the Stratford actor. All, without exception, tell us the Stratfordian lad "had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." We got that scrap of news from the undependable John Aubrey, whose manuscript (c.1680) is in the Ashmolean collection; and Aubrey says he got it "from Mr. Beeston." This was William Beeston, Governor of the King and Queen's young company of players, who lost his office in 1640, and was then succeeded by Sir William D'Avenant.

We are further told that Shakespeare had been formerly "bound apprentice to a butcher in Stratford, but run from his master to London." We get that from a letter dated April 10, 1693, written by John Dowdall to Edward Southwell. Who they were we were not able to discover, but did discover that Dowdall professed to have obtained the letter from the Parish Clerk of Stratford, who was at the time over eighty years of age. His testimony was ill-remembered gossip to say the least.

We are told that, in all likelihood, Shakespere had gone to school; but we have no evidence whatever of this. Halliwell-Phillipps (*Life* 1848) makes no question of the actor having been educated at the Stratford grammar school, and remarks: "It would be a very difficult task to identify the exact position of the room which Shakspear was educated." If the actor did go to school, according to the estimate of the day, he was accounted a "shocking dunce," as Harness conjectures, and terms him with an ailment of being lame; a myth coming from Capell mentioned earlier. It is pleasant to indulge in such picturesque imaginings; but imagination is not biography. Furthermore, one very important prequalification a child needed to enroll in school was to have the ability at the age of seven to be able to read and write in English and Latin. Lastly, but not in the least everlastingly, we are told that when Shakespere got to London, he earned a livelihood by holding horses at the doors of the theatres. A myth, on all accounts; because the story came from an anonymous author of *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753). The anonymous author writes that he obtained the tale from someone he could not name. Some say he got the myth from Dr. Samuel Johnson, because Shiels, who wrote the greater part of the *Lives for Cibber*, was Johnson's amanuensis.

And of such "hearsays is our life of Shakespeare manufactured," noted Ingleby.

¹⁹¹ When the forgery drama entitled *Vortigern*, alleged newly-discovered of a William Shakespeare drama was announced, and was to be staged at Drury Lane theatre on April 2, 1796, before the performance, Malone distributed a handbill at the doors cautioning the public against the fraud. Samuel Ireland, the father, responded with another handbill, requesting playgoers to lay aside all prejudice.

Chronology of the hypothesized pedigree to the “Stratford Moniment”

- 1616: Death of the Stratford actor
- 1616: William Basse’s reference to Shakespeare’s “threefold, fourfold tomb;” no mention to the “Stratford Moniment”
- 1620: John Taylor speaks only of Shakespeare and his works
- 1623: Leonard Digges’ mention of the “Stratford Moniment” (First Folio 1623)
- 1627: Michael Drayton’s *Battaile of Agincourt*; an elegy mentioning Shakespeare
- 1630: Knowledge to the town being William Shakespeare’s birthplace (*Banquet of Jests*)
- 1631: Inscription from Shakespere’s gravestone (Weever’s *Ancient Funeral Monuments*)
- 1632: Publication of the Second Folio
- 1632: Milton’s memorable epitaph
- 1634: Diary entry of Lieutenant Hammond stating he had seen the effigy
- 1634: Sir William Dugdale sketches a man leaning upon a woolsack as the effigy
- 1656: Sketch from Hollar in Dugdale’s *Antiquities* (Figure 10)
- 1674: Mention of William Shakespeare (Camden’s *Remaines*)
- 1694: William Hall writes he saw the cursed tombstone
- 1725: George Vertue sketches for Pope’s publications (Figure 12)
- 1746: Contributions collected from the *Othello* play for repairs to the effigy
- 1748: Stopes’s conjecture that the face of the effigy was reconstructed
- 1749: Repairs finally completed from contributions collected from the *Othello* play
- 1790: William Roberts of Oxford repairs the finger and thumb
- 1793: Effigy painted white at the request of Edmond Malone
- 1814: George Bullock creates casts

CHAPTER TWO

Facts not Myths

“We may be almost inclined to think Shakespeare a myth.”
—Samuel Neil ¹⁹²

The research for this chapter turned out to be problematic, or to be more correct, it was difficult to attain substantiated documentation to present the subjects given. Taking this into account, it is important for the reader to realize, that although any prior knowledge of William Shakespeare is merged with the Stratfordian actor, we tread lightly in this chapter to show that the one is nowhere to be found (except in literature), whilst the other is everywhere to be spotted (in a private agenda). Our first subject deals with the alleged birthplace of Shakespere, which turned out to have very shaky foundations.

I

The Birthplace

The history of the birthplace initially developed from the great American showman, P. T. Barnum, who often noted how people “liked to be fooled.” Chapman had believed how “the accepted stuff of Shakespere’s birthplace, and that of his wife, in relation to the Hathaway Cottage, is biographic fantasy. It was this shrewd clever American [Barnum] who made Stratford into a great showplace. It was this man who woke up the relic-mongers of the town to the fact that it were better to keep the old cottage and bogus Shakespere relics to fool and fleece the gaping thousands who visited every year.” ¹⁹³

There is no small wonder then, why we could find no written record of which house the Stratfordian actor was allegedly born in, though it has been customary to justify universal belief that he was born in Henley Street. “For ourselves,” Knight writes, “we frankly confess that the want of absolute certainty that he was there born, produces a state of mind that is something higher and pleasanter than the conviction that depends upon positive evidence. We are content to follow the popular faith undoubtingly. The traditional belief is sanctioned by long usage and universal acceptation.” ¹⁹⁴ It is peculiar such a scholar would state this.

Washington Irving had visited Henley Street and did not believe any different when he noted how they should not allow any “rude pen destroy such homage, or seek to deprive us of the little we possess connected with our immortal bard,” because, as Knight concluded, “tradition says that Shakespere was born in one of the houses in Henley Street; tradition points out the very room in which he was born. Let us not disturb the belief.” To disturb it is impossible, and

¹⁹² The Home of Shakespeare (Warwick: Henry T. Cooke & Son.) Undated publication.

¹⁹³ The Shakespere Mortuary Malediction (California: Giles Publishing, 1912).

¹⁹⁴ Shakespere (London: Virtue & Co., 1869).

Knight should have said we could not if we would, and would not if we could, for when Barnum undertook to buy the structure for transportation across the Atlantic, a local newspaper had announced how “local antiquaries would be likely to prove that the house never was Shakespere’s at all, and that the Yankee had bought a pig in a poke.” It did not signify much to Barnum, as a matter of truth, if the old cottage did not rest historically on the solid ground of authenticated fact, or upon the swamp of guesswork.

Halliwell-Phillipps, in view of the same possibility, publicly declared that he would then gladly unite with others in showing that Shakespere was born in some other part of the town, prepared to report a myth, “Shakespeare was born near the churchyard. A house near the river, called the Brook House, now pulled down, was some years since asserted to have been the birthplace;”¹⁹⁵ a disinformation also circulating from our old friend Oldys: “I read of Shakespeare’s house bordering upon the churchyard at Stratford in Gildon.”¹⁹⁶

The “tradition” was created, as many other myths were, just in case the birthplace was debunked so they would then transfer the birthplace to “a house near the river, called the Brook House, now pulled down;” it would be corroborated by “the best authority” Oldys. Any irregularities would have easily been blamed on some clerical error.

There are some peculiarities as to the years of purchase and dwelling of the Shakesperes in Henley Street. First, we have the Stratford Corporation records showing John Shakespere residing in Henley Street in 1552, “in the house which tradition assigns as the poet’s birthplace,” but not recording if he ever owned the place that year. Second, three years later (1555) John Shakespere purchases two copyhold houses; one in Henley Street and the other in Greenhill Street. Third, in 1556, John Shakespere became the owner of the eastern cottage, and in 1575, there is a recorded fine levied on the purchase of the two houses in Henley Street; the western being assigned by tradition as the birthplace, the eastern “probably” used by John Shakespere as a wool shop and later converted into an Inn called, “The Swan and Maidenhead,” as noted in the Stratford Public Records Office. The scholar Stopes offers to clear up some inconsistencies with a question: “We must then face the question, either John Shakspear owned the birthplace in 1552, and resided in it until he added the wool shop in 1556; or he rented the wool shop in 1552, which he purchased in 1556; or he rented the birthplace in 1552, which he purchased in 1575 from the Halls. But these uncertainties create the doubt that remains in the mind of some, was the poet really born in the birthplace which tradition has assigned to him, or not?”¹⁹⁷

Douglas Jerrold also asked a question: “No legal proof exists of Shakespere being born in this house; but of what, that many venerate is there legal proof?”¹⁹⁸ Henry Davey makes some logical theory upon how, “Shakespere is conventionally said to have been born in Henley

¹⁹⁵ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

¹⁹⁶ MS notes to Langbaine.

¹⁹⁷ Shakespeare’s Family (London: Elliot Stock, 1901).

¹⁹⁸ J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847), 39.

Street, and on April 23, 1564. There is no proof of either assertion. The birthplace was not bought by the Shakesperes till 1575.”¹⁹⁹

Certainty lies for the year 1575, when John Shakespere owned or occupied the building in which the birth room is so confidently located; but this would be a year that would have Shakespere at the age of eleven and not the place he was born. Regardless, on January 1, 1848, a Trust was founded in Stratford for the sole purpose of preserving on behalf of the public, the house known as the birthplace, with the adjoining building, which had been in the occupation of John Shakespere; and in October 1861, the Shakespeare Fund was established: Members disclosed a scheme so comprehensive as to make ample demands on the public purse for some time to come, involving as it did to purchase the garden at “New Place;” to purchase the remainder of the birthplace estate; to purchase Anne Hathaway’s cottage; to purchase Getby’s copyhold, and to purchase any other properties at or near the town. This led to a scheme that took place in November 17, 1902, where the American millionaire, Andrew Carnegie, wrote to Sir Arthur Hodgson, then Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Trustees, stating how fortunate he would esteem himself if the Trustees would accept his purchase from him to be added and preserved as part of the birthplace property. Deeds were duly executed, and the houses and ground was purchased. The Executive Committee, at their meeting of December 3, 1902, unanimously passed a resolution of thanks to Mr. Carnegie “for his most generous offer.”²⁰⁰ As a result, an article came out entitled *The Body Snatchers* in April 1903;²⁰¹ the author was Marie Corelli. She wrote that Carnegie’s library was likely to proudly overshadow the birthplace as a sign-manual of what the “over-officiousness of moneyed men can do to dwarf the abode of genius.”²⁰²

The residence named “New Place” was built around 1490 by Sir Hugh Clopton who died in London in 1496. Being a bachelor, he left the house to his great-nephew, William Clopton, who died in 1521. From the Clopton family it passed with purchase to the family of Bott, in 1563. William Bott (solicitor) resold the property to William Underhill, within a short space of time, between 1563 and 1570. The Stratford actor is supposed to have purchased it from the Underhill family for £60, consisting of one messuage, two barns, and two gardens, with “their appurtenances,” during the Easter Term of 1597. A curious incident postponed Shakespere’s legal possession of this property. The vendor, William Underhill, died suddenly of poison at Fillongley, near Coventry, and the legal transfer of “New Place” to the actor was left at the time incomplete. Underhill’s eldest son (Fulk) died a minor at Warwick the next year, and after his death it was proved that he had murdered his father. The family estates were in jeopardy of forfeiture, but passed on to “the felon’s” next brother (Hercules) when he came of age in May 1602. In a new deed, the transfer of “New Place” to Shakespere was then completed. After the latter’s death, the house was then passed on to his daughter (Mrs. Hall) for life.²⁰³ Mrs. Hall

¹⁹⁹ Stratford Town Shakespeare, Vol. X. 266.

²⁰⁰ Sir Sidney Lee, *Alleged Vandalism at Stratford-on-Avon* (Archibald Constable & Co., Ltd., 1903).

²⁰¹ A monthly review called “King and Country.”

²⁰² *The Plain Truth* (London: Mathuen & Co., 1903).

²⁰³ (a) J. C. M. Bellew, *Shakespere’s Home* (Brothers & Co., 1863); (b) Frederick Wellstood, *Shakespeare’s Birthplace* (Stratford: Edward Fox & Son, 1916).

died at “New Place” on July 11, 1649, and her property passed to her daughter and only child, Elizabeth, whose first husband, Thomas Nash, died on April 4, 1647.

At the beginning of 1847, it was announced “New Place” was to be sold to the highest bidder. It was determined, amongst a few friends, to call a public meeting at the Thatched House Tavern. There were no titled names paraded to draw together a company; yet there was a full attendance. A committee was nominated, chiefly of men of letters. One nobleman only, Lord Morpeth, was included in the nomination; he was not a mere ornamental adjunct to a working committee, but laboured as strenuously as any to accomplish the object for which they were associated. They raised a large subscription, though it was somewhat short of £3,000 for which they obtained the property. The deficiency was subsequently made up, in some measure, by a performance at the Covent Garden theatre, in which all the great actors and actresses of the time took scenes from various plays of Shakespeare; and partly by the proceeds of gratuitous readings by a Mr. Macready, at the time when he was retiring from the stage. “When the Shakspere house had been purchased by the London Committee,” Knight writes, “and when the adjoining tenements had also been purchased by a separate subscription at Stratford, the necessity was apparent of having the house taken care of, and shown to visitors, by someone who, at the least, would not cast an air of ridicule over the whole thing, as was the case with the ignorant women who had made a property of it by the receipt of shillings and sixpences. Mr. Charles Dickens organized a series of amateur performances, in aid of the fund for the endowment of a perpetual curatorship of Shakspere’s house, to be always held by someone distinguished in literature, and more especially in dramatic literature; the profits of which it is the intention of the Shakspere House Committee to keep entirely separate from the fund now raising for the purchase of the house.”

We come to an itinerary by Rev. R. Warner who visited Stratford in 1801. He confesses “on inquiring for the birthplace of our great poet, we were not a little surprised to be carried through a small butcher’s shop into a dirty back room,” and about the middle of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare idolaters, “in their fanaticism fell upon innocent and dirty Stratford with the fixed purpose to create a birthplace for the immortal bard, whom in their blindness they mixed up with the ex-butcher boy who was reared on some Henley Street Dunghill. The commission visited three different houses neither one of which quite suited their purpose. A charitable townsman tore down one of these three mud huts, which reduced the commission’s difficulty by thirty-three and one-third per cent.”²⁰⁴

Dugdale, in his 1656 *Antiquities*, made no reference to the house in which Shakespeare was supposed to have been born. He allegedly visited the town in 1634 and again in 1653, three years before his book was finally published, and at that time, only thirty-seven years after the death of the actor, there would have been many Stratfordians who could have pointed out the birthplace, yet they did not. Maybe Dugdale never set foot in Warwickshire, but one traveler who did in 1682, wrote up his diary without mentioning Shakespeare at all. The town, he noted, was “well built, with fair streets and good inns,” possessed “one good church and a long and well-built bridge;” but he never wrote a word about its most famous son.

²⁰⁴ Lewis F. Bostelmann, Rutland (New York: Rutland Publishing Co., 1911).

Horace Walpole, who did not usually overlook much, explored the town in the summer of 1751 without discovering the birthplace. And in 1760, only nine years before David Garrick's spectacular Jubilee, a noteworthy visitor was wholly silent as to the dramatist's natal shrine.

The first recorded celebration in Shakespere's memory, in his native town, was by Peg Woffington (1714–1760) and Roger Kemble, the father of the famous Mrs. Siddons. Woffington was an actress, born in Ireland. It was rumoured over time, that she had an affair with the actor Garrick for a number of years. A performance of *Othello* was given in 1748 by a touring manager of some repute named John Ward, being the maternal grandfather of Siddons; the tour would raise funds to repair the "Stratford Moniment," that was investigated earlier. Garrick is sometimes credited with entertaining the ambition to have founded an institution in honour of Shakespere which should serve as a kind of university for all textual and histrionic students of poetry; however Garrick may have cherished such an idea before his own Jubilee experience, such were the satires and lampoons provoked by his masquerading, because his enthusiasm cooled, and it was left for another actor to revive the project in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The actor was Charles Mathews, most remarkable of mimics, when fulfilling an engagement at the town in the closing month of 1820.

After the first jubilation of 1748, there came a second called the "Garrick Jubilee." Ticket of admission was priced at one guinea for entrance to the Oratorio, the Dedication Ode, and the Ball which was signed by Garrick himself. The program of the firework display was held at 8 o'clock on September 7. The records of the proceedings were added on September 6 and 7. On the first day, the entertainments began at six in the morning. As the year of that three-day celebration went on, the use of the word "Jubilee" was a misnomer, for it did not coincide with either the alleged birth or death year of Shakespere's.

The entire "Garrick Jubilee" had so many "ridiculous features" that Samuel Foote (actor and rival to Garrick), had an easy task in satirizing its principal events: "A jubilee, as it hath lately appeared, is a public invitation, circulated and urged by puffing, to go post without horses, to an obscure borough without representatives, governed by a Mayor and Aldermen who are no Magistrates, to celebrate a great poet, whose own works have made him immortal, by an ode without poetry, music without melody, dinners without victuals, and lodgings without beds; a masquerade where half the people appeared barefaced, a horse-race up to the knees in water, fireworks extinguished as soon as they were lighted, a gingerbread amphitheater, which, like a house of cards, tumbled to pieces as soon as it was finished." ²⁰⁵

It does not seem that Walpole thought much of Garrick's acting either, for in a letter of his to George Montague, dated from Strawberry Hill on October 16, 1769, he writes: "I have blushed at Paris when the papers came over crammed with ribaldry or with Garrick's insufferable nonsense about Shakspeare. As that man's writings will be preserved by his name, who will believe that he was a tolerable actor? Gibber wrote as bad Odes, but then Gibber wrote *The Careless Husband* and his own *Life*, which both deserve immortality. Garrick's prologues and

²⁰⁵ "Universal Magazine" (1769).

epilogues are as bad as his Pindaries and Pantomimes.”²⁰⁶ Even so, the annual festivities continued and involved a very considerable sum of money on the festival undertakings, and in the carrying out with an amount of labour, mental and physical, that expends which cannot be overestimated. Without much exaggeration, it may be said that for nearly a year prior the festivity, the inhabitants of an entire town devoted all their leisure (and not a few of their business hours) to what is commonly called “tercentenary affairs” and as a very praiseworthy result is always achieved, some history of their labours and fruits were contained in the newspapers of the day. After Garrick’s second celebration in 1769, there was a third in 1827 and a fourth in 1830.

Returning to the initial subject, whatever we make of these irregularities regarding the alleged birthplace of Shakespere, some years before the close of the eighteenth century, that western cottage was accepted as the natal shrine of the actor; next step was to select the room in which he was born. “As below stairs was a butcher-shop and above-stairs was the attic, the question of deciding upon the very room in which the greatest of all poets was born was soon settled when the most logical member of the commission clinched his argument with the fact that the attic was at least seven feet nearer heaven.”²⁰⁷ For the next sixty-three years these enthusiastic Stratfordians dug and delved for authentic mementoes; things that the heavenly poet allegedly wore, touched, lay or sat at, upon, or under anything, in fact even if it wasn’t authentic their saying so was stronger proof than any possible denial or refutation.

To give an example, a Mrs. Mary Hornby started the ball rolling soon after Garrick’s visit to Stratford; her successors duly sworn to the task of being loyal to the fraud, and succeeded in collecting quite a museum of indisputable relics of Shakespere. Hornby is rumoured to have had connections (by marriage) with the Harts, who were custodians of Hathaway’s cottage from 1793 till 1820. After her husband died, not only had she more purchasers of her works, since she was the author of *Extemporany Verses*, *The Battle of Waterloo*, and *The Broken Vow* (a comedy printed in 1820), but the tips of the devotees represented considerable revenue. It was unfortunate for the “poetical widow” that she was not the owner of that lucrative birthplace; on the contrary, she was merely a tenant paying at first the modest rent of £10 on an annual basis. What she made from the donations of the pilgrims she declined to disclose, but the owner of the cottage came to the conclusion that £10 a year was too small a proportion and announced the intention of raising the rent to £40. Soon enough, by 1820, Hornby’s rent was raised to £40 a year, so she packed up her bags, grabbed her “relics” and moved to another house. Before she left, she white-washed the walls of the cottage, which seemed to be a mania in those days, since Malone had also white-washed the Shakespere bust in 1793. “Whatever Stratford may have been in Walpole’s and in Garrick’s day, it is now a clean and attractive little town, but terribly commercialized for the benefit of the sentimental American tourist.”²⁰⁸ Robert Frazer wrote.

²⁰⁶ Anna B. McMahan, *The Best Letters of Horace Walpole* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1890).

²⁰⁷ Lewis F. Bostelmann, *Rutland* (New York: Rutland Publishing Co., 1911).

²⁰⁸ The Silent Shakespeare (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915).

Lee mentions the alleged birthplace in 1896 was visited by 27,038 people from over forty countries. All led to Barnum's threat, that he would pack all this junk upon a steamer specially chartered for the purpose and transport the entire cargo, house and all to the States. "Why," Barnum is reported to have said, "I can get up a better birthplace and more authentic relics than they have over there without half trying, and my public would never call me a liar; but would applaud my enterprise and superior gall." So the howl that then went up was sublime, as Artemus Ward would have described it. "Not until the Stratfordian Commission in turn, threatened to put up another birthplace, birth room, relics and all, every bit as authentic as the one now shown to pilgrims more so, if anything did Barnum give up his praiseworthy scheme, fearing that a continued reduplication of authentic birthplaces and relics of the great bard might stale his bargain and lessen his honorable renown for humbuggery."²⁰⁹ Such machinations had Halliwell-Phillipps convinced that "Stratford-upon-Avon has become the seat of Shakespearean charlatany." By the opening years of the nineteenth century, the alleged birthplace was visited by the forerunners of that band of pilgrims which has swollen to an annual army of thousands.

II

The Droeshout Image

Our next subject deals with the Droeshout image on the FrontPage of the First Folio 1623, and how the circumstances of its creation reminds one of what Oliver Cromwell had said: "Paint me as I am," said Cromwell shaking Sir Peter Lely (the artist) roughly by the shoulder. "If you leave out the scars and wrinkles I will not pay you a shilling." Wrinkles or not, the Droeshout image has been criticized by many; one of these critics has been Briton: "It cannot be like any human face, for it is evidently ill drawn, in all the features; and a bad artist can never make a good likeness." James Boaden in his criticisms on the portrait also remarks that "it is made to furnish out a portrait of the poet in the edition of 1623; in that of 1632, in which it continued very tolerable; and in the two latter Folios of 1664 and 1685, when I confess it to have become, what it has frequently been called, an abominable libel upon humanity."²¹⁰

As to the artist of this so much criticized image, he was Martin Droeshout, who without certainty, has been indexed in biographical dictionaries either Dutch or French, (they cannot decide), and to have been christened on April 26, 1601. The *Dictionary of National Biography* writes: "Martin Droeshout was admitted a member of the Dutch Church in 1624, at the age of twenty-three, and it is probably he that we may identify the artist known throughout the literary world as the engraver of the portrait of William Shakespeare prefixed to the Folio edition of his works published in 1623, with the well-known lines by Ben Jonson affixed below it."²¹¹ This theory was also considered by an author, George Scharf, when he wrote his article entitled *On Principal Portraits of Shakespeare*, in *Notes & Queries* edition of April 23, 1864.

²⁰⁹ Lewis F. Bostelmann, Rutland (New York: Rutland Publishing Co., 1911).

²¹⁰ Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, Plays of William Shakespeare (London: J. Nichols & Son, 1813), 2.

²¹¹ Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee. Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1888), Vol. XVI. 18.

Elsewhere, Droeshout is said to have resided in England about the year 1623, the same year the First Folio was published; was chiefly employed by the booksellers (as was Leonard Digges) and engraving some portraits, which, “if they cannot be admired for the beauty of their execution, are valued for their scarcity.”²¹² In Strutt’s *Biographical Dictionary of Engravers* published in 1785, Droeshout is presented as “one of the indifferent engravers” of his century;²¹³ and in Gould’s *Biographical Dictionary of Painters, Sculptors, Engravers, and Architects*, Droeshout is considered to be definitely of French origin.²¹⁴

Martin Droeshout’s arrival in England, the same year as the publication of the First Folio, as biographical dictionaries tell us, raises an argument if he was commissioned from overseas for the engraving of the Folio’s publication. This would not be so uncommon as we might think, because “there was no art in England that is to say in its limited sense of painting pictures or chiseling statues.” Stopes explains. “There was not a sculptor in all England above the level of a tomb-maker; there was hardly a native painter before Hilliard, [1547–1619] and he became a painter after being a carver of jewelry. If men wanted their portraits painted they sent for foreign artists.”²¹⁵ If Droeshout was commissioned, as regards to the opinions of critics, he did not rise to the commissioners’ expectations, as we read from Alfred Pollard: “If his (Jonson’s) lines on Droeshout’s portrait are compared with their subject, we may well be inclined to wonder whether he had seen the very doubtful masterpiece at the time that he wrote them.”²¹⁶ And Lee (*Life* 1915) remarks how “Jonson’s testimony does no credit to his artistic discernment; the expression of countenance is neither distinctive nor lifelike.”

Spielmann (author) in 1924, adhered to the “mystery that veils so much in Shakespeare’s genius, life, and work, involves also some aspects of his iconography, it is probable that of Shakespeare more portraits have been painted, drawn, engraved, and modelled, than of any other uncrowned King of men. The British Museum, it is true, according to its Catalogue, has only about 200 engraved portraits of the poet. The Grolier Club of New York, at its Tercentenary Exhibition in 1916, did better with about 450, including 50 each of the Bust and the Droeshout Plate. Many of us no doubt could have added scores to these. And yet, of all these presentments only two portraits of the poet can be regarded as authentic; that greatly simplifies the problem. Yet neither is directly a life-portrait.”²¹⁷ Spielmann regarded authentic Droeshout’s image.

To top it all, the *Tailor and Cutter* newspaper, in its issue of March 9, 1911, stated that the figure of Droeshout’s was undoubtedly clothed in an impossible coat composed of the back and the front of the same left arm. And in the following April, the *Gentleman’s Tailor Magazine*, under the heading of a “Problem for the Trade,” prints the two halves of the coat, shoulder to shoulder, and reports: “It is passing strange that something like three centuries

²¹² George Williamson, Brian’s Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1903), Vol. II.

²¹³ Biographical Dictionary of Engravers (London: 1785), Vol. I. 264.

²¹⁴ (London: G & A Greenland, 1838), Vol. I.

²¹⁵ Burbage & Shakespeare’s Stage (London: Alexander Moring Ltd., 1913), 3.

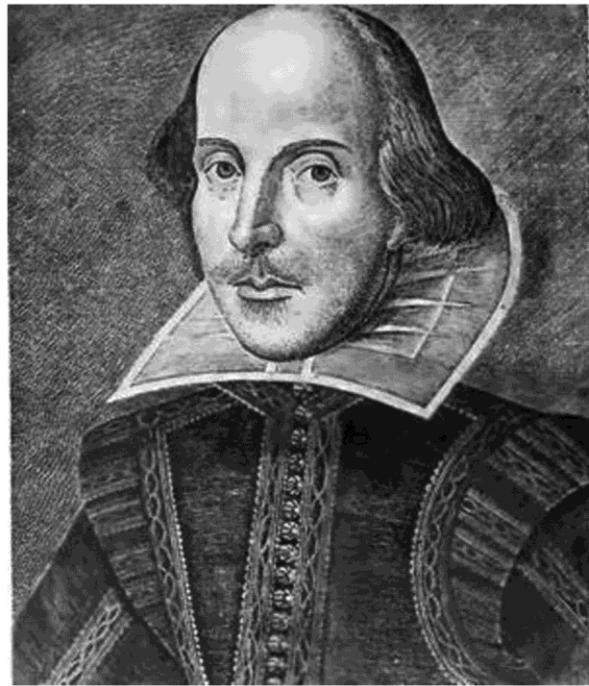
²¹⁶ Shakespeare Folios and Quartos (1909), 122.

²¹⁷ A Comparative Study of the Droeshout Portrait and the Stratford Monument (London: Humphrey Milford; Oxford University Press, 1924).

should have been allowed to elapse before the tailor's handiwork should have been appealed to in this particular manner. The special point is that in what is known as the authentic portrait of William Shakespeare, which appears in the celebrated First Folio edition, published in 1623, a remarkable sartorial puzzle is apparent. The tunic, coat, or whatever the garment may have been called at the time, is so strangely illustrated that the right-hand side of the forepart is obviously the left-hand side of the back part; and so gives a harlequin appearance to the figure, which it is not unnatural to assume was intentional, and done with express object and purpose." To which "object and purpose," the artist Droeshout drew a coat, composed of the back and the front of the same left arm, which would "assume an intention," the editor of the magazine did not elaborate. But we end this subject by offering a peculiar similarity found, regarding this garment: The identical right-hand side of the forepart being the left-hand side of the back part, can also be seen in Sir Francis Bacon's garment in figure 13 below.



Sir Francis Bacon



Droeshout Image

Figure 13: Two left sleeves

III Shakespere's Religion

The Droeshout image is not the only subject that remains to confuse us, as much as the subject on religion, which is our next subject. Of the actor's religious status, Yeatman (*Vindication*

1911) gave an opinion that Shakespere was the “child of Catholicity;” the author also went into his true belief to say that Shakespere was born in Hatton, and not Stratford; that he was also baptized in Hatton and attended school there, having nothing to do with the town of Stratford. To signify how important this religious matter was in those days, another author, William John Birch (1811–1863) had gathered all the Shakespearean plays in order to offer inferences on the religious matters depicted in each play, and Birch’s statement is of peculiarity: “A forged Will & Testament of Shakespere has been produced by the Catholics; and Protestants have represented him, without success, as being their champion.”²¹⁸ If Birch was referring to the alleged last Will & Testament of John Shakespere’s, we could not learn; but a brief account of the document is worth giving.

In 1757, there appeared an alleged last Will & Testament of John Shakespere. We say alleged because to date, there has been no corroboration of its authenticity. The alleged will was rejected on external grounds as a forgery, since it was composed, in Halliwell-Phillipps’s opinion, by John Jordan the forger. On the other hand, Lee calls the document “Jordan’s most important achievement.” Why Lee thought this, he never disclosed. The document was a small paper book consisting of six leaves, and contained a spiritual Catholic testament with the name of John Shakespere ascribed to it. The paper book was found by a Thomas Moseley, who was a master bricklayer. Moseley found the document logged between the rafters of the roof when retiling the house of Thomas Hart, a lineal descendant of Shakespere’s sister. Moseley lent his discovery to Alderman Payton early in 1785, who was fascinated by the discovery. He even commented how he wished the name ascribed on the document to have been William Shakespere instead of John Shakespere.

Now, in 1785, Jordan did make a copy of this artifact, and sent it to the “Gentleman’s Magazine,” but it was rejected. If it was rejected due to some oddness, or because it portrayed the religion of John Shakespere as being a Catholic, could not be established. However, the copy was termed “an outright forgery” also by the Rev. T. Green who was then rector of Wilford. Three years later, in 1788, Moseley died, leaving the book he had originally found between the rafters of the roof in the hands of Payton, who in turn sent it through the Rev. T. Davenport (Vicar of Stratford) to Malone. The latter took pains to investigate the matter thoroughly. He even obtained from Jordan his account of his connection with the document. After Malone’s investigation, and with all the evidence before him (Jordan’s copy rejected by the “Gentleman’s Magazine” and by the Rev. Green), the Shakespearean scholar declared himself perfectly satisfied as to its genuineness, believing that the document contents are such as “no one could have thought of inventing with a view to literary imposition.” So Malone publishes the pedigree of the manuscript in 1790.

Now, six years later in 1796, Malone declares that he was mistaken as to the writer of the document. Here is what he said: “The will could never have been written by any of the poet’s family.” Why Malone changed his beliefs, he does not tell us, but it is evident that he never calls in question the authenticity of the document, only the autography of it. There are doubts how Malone was able to establish the autography of the document, since he could not have

²¹⁸ An Inquiry (London: C. Mitchell, 1848).

done this without some sample of handwriting from John Shakespere to compare it with. There are no written works of John Shakespere, nor was this man able to write. (See Figure 7)

Some have supposed that Jordan, instead of making an exact copy of the will, when the document was lent to him by Moseley, fabricated it and returned his fabrication to Moseley instead of the original document; this was deemed unnecessary on Jordan's part and was dismissed as a theory on the grounds that the original document was already known to Moseley and Payton, and was subsequently again in their possession, transmitted by them as genuine through Davenport to Malone. So, they must have noticed any discrepancy between Jordan's copy and the original, and it is peculiar that had such a circumstance transpired, Moseley, Payton, Davenport, and Malone never exposed Jordan's forgery, or entered a word of protest against his action.

Chambers (author) did not believe the religious will was a forgery. "But if the John Shakspeare who made it was the poet's father," he noted, "then it probably dates from his early life, and carries little evidence as to his religious position under Elizabeth." ²¹⁹ Another account on the same subject of John Shakspeare's religious status has been recorded in the *Worcester Inventories* which is of interest to add.

Richard Field [(1561–1625) the printer] had a sister, Margery, who married Robert Young, a Stratford dyer, on October 16, 1586. Their daughter, Ursula named after mistress Field, the grandmother, was baptized on May 10, 1587, less than seven months after their wedding. Other children were born, Edward in 1588, Margaret who soon died in 1590, and Michael in 1592. Then the father died, being buried March 1, 1595, and Margery Young was left a widow.

Worcester Inventories Misc. Doc. Vol. II. 244. Folio 47

Keeping the above inventory in mind, there is an entry in Richard Field's last Will & Testament, which states: "Three prayer books; and that master Shakespeare bought the one book." The *Worcester Inventories* comments upon this section in Field's will: "If master Shakespeare was John, the old Alderman, [Shakespere's father,] the purchase is evidence (if we need it) that he was not illiterate; if William, the son, it is evidence of the poet's presence in Stratford about 25 August 1595/6." We could not discover if the "master Shakespeare" noted in Field's will was John Shakespere. The investigation comes to a dead-end just like in the Earl of Rutland's accounts for the Belvoir *impresa* of 1613.

No one can for sure declare if the "Mr. Shakspeare" in the Earl of Rutland's accounts is the Stratfordian actor, neither can it be ascertained with certainty if the "master Shakespeare" in Field's will was the father, John Shakespere. It is only possible to come up with conjecture, which we will not do, since this work deals with dispelling the myths around the Bard's life.

Leaving John Shakespere's religion, we continue with his son's, and enter Bowden's beliefs how Shakespere's religion was connected with the Catholics. Bowden does not base his

²¹⁹ The Works of William Shakespeare (1901), Vol. I.

theories on the alleged will of John Shakespere we just investigated, but on the Essex rebellion of 1601.

The conspiracy failed; Essex himself was beheaded. The Earl of Southampton was sent to the Tower. The Earls of Rutland, Mounteagle, Sirs John Davies, C. Danvers, C. Blount, Robert Catesby [involved later in the Gunpowder Plot] and William Green, both Warwickshire men, John Arden, the poet's connection, John Wheeler, John Shakespeare's friend and fellow-recusant, all Catholics, were among those involved in the consequences of the conspiracy. The poet, although his play was condemned, himself escaped. Hayward instead was chosen as the victim of the royal vengeance, and was imprisoned and racked. But here again, as in the Lucy whippings and imprisonment, so now in the Essex conspiracy we find the poet connected apparently with the Catholic party.²²⁰

Bowden has some interesting theories, but not all in his statement is correct. First, the writer Hayward was not racked, because Sir Francis Bacon managed to lighten Elizabeth's ruthless action against this author, and definitely had much to do in influencing this.²²¹ Second, there is no mention of Shakespeare's name in any court trial when Essex was brought to justice, that would allow us to determine that he was ever suspected (never mind that he had escaped charges as Bowden assumes). Finally, there exist only rumours and fanciful tales on the "Lucy whippings," to which we will come to learn of later.

Coming back to the author Yeatman (*Vindication* 1911), who wrote about the alleged will of John Shakespere, tells us how "the muniment rooms of Shakespere's friends and especially of those implicated in Robert Cecil's invention, the Gunpowder Plot, should be carefully ransacked. There can be little doubt that the poet himself was a suspect, and as such banished from London. He had only just escaped the Essex rebellion, which ended with that nobleman's life; but even Cecil's twenty years of resolute government had not given him the courage to prosecute. Besides that, the numerous friends and relations of the poet, some in the highest positions, would make such a prosecution dangerous, if not impossible."²²²

We researched the Essex rebellion and also the alleged Gunpowder Plot thoroughly for another project. Nowhere did we discover the name William Shakespeare (or Shakespere) as one of the perpetrators in either of the pre-mentioned political up rises of the time. Yes, the Cloptons were Catholics; the Underhills of Idlicote were Catholic; the Ardens were Catholics; and, so were the Southamptons. But we never discovered the Stratford actor's name, nor the author of the Shakespearean Canon to be directly involved in any up rise. It is sad that the loss of the churchwardens' accounts, prior to the year 1617, has deprived us of a valuable source of information respecting the exact religious changes made in Stratford.²²³ What we did discover is interesting.

²²⁰ The Religion of Shakespeare (London: Burns & Gates, 1899), 101, 102.

²²¹ See Bacon's *Apology* to the Earl of Southampton published in 1604.

²²² Is William Shakespeare's Will Holographic? (The "Saturday Review" 1906), 3.

²²³ Richard Savage and Edgar I. Fripp, Minutes & Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-Upon-Avon & other Records 1553–1620 (Oxford: Dugdale Society, 1921), Vol. I.

Sifting through historical records, they lead us to the fact, that many Elizabethan actors were being used in the alleged Gunpowder Plot (and prior) for use against incriminating Catholics. To give just a flavour, Thomas Kyd (1558–1594) who was a poet, play actor and Christopher Marlowe's roommate at the time of the latter's assassination in 1593, together with a Robert Baines, who was a “bed-fellow” that Marlowe had met in Flanders, gave written depositions against Marlowe prior the assassination to Sir John Puckering who was the Lord Keeper at the time. Kyd tried to reason why he was suspected as being Marlowe's partner, and all these depositions can be found in the British Library of the Harleian Manuscripts.²²⁴

There is no doubt that Kyd, when arrested, underwent the trials of torture to confess whatever it was Elizabeth's Privy Council needed in order they arrange so bogus a story that could be fed to the public so Marlowe's death be justified.²²⁵ Posterity has heard but little of the wicked deeds perpetrated against justice and humanity by the Tudor Monarchs and their unscrupulous spies. Since we are on the subject, an example can be given of a man named Parker who was employed by Burghley to “counterfeit a confessor,” and to visit, in the dark of night, certain prisoners in the Tower, who had confessions made-up in the usual form due to torture. The result of this was the arrest and execution of several innocent men, and the imprisonment of others, of whose fate their friends could learn nothing.

Burghley's spies, according to their own correspondence with their patron, were ready and willing to perpetrate the most murderous and treacherous deeds against confiding men whose friendship they had won, as of Dr. Astlowe's case shows, who was physician residing in London about 1575. Dr. Astlowe was racked for being friendly towards the Queen of Scots when he paid her a professional visit. Morgan writes: “The unfortunate doctor was racked twice almost to death, at the Tower.”

Marlowe was indeed himself a spy, counterfeiting money in Flanders prior to his assassination: A killing that was termed “a great reckoning in a little room,” as noted in the Shakespeare play *As You Like It*.²²⁶

Ben Jonson had connections with the British intelligence of the time when the alleged Gunpowder Plot was at its peak, being the same year Shakespere (his friend as the Stratfordians try to persuade) had bought a £440 worth moiety of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe.

Following is a letter written by Ben Jonson to Sir Robert Cecil, dated November 8, 1605, three days after the Gunpowder Plot.

²²⁴ 6848 f.154.

²²⁵ [<http://www.scribd.com/doc/63083728/Peddling-Power-Elizabethan-Jacobean-Plots-and-Plotters>]

²²⁶ Scene 13 (3.3).

British Museum Collection of Cecil's Letters

MSS. 61778, fol. 437

Letter written by Ben Jonson to Robert Cecil

November 8, 1605 ²²⁷

May It Please Your Lordship:

To understand there hath been no want in me, either of labour or of sincerity, in the discharge of this business to the satisfaction of your Lordship and the state, and, whereas yesterday, on the first mention of it, I took the most ready course (to my present thought) by the Venetian Ambassador's Chaplain, who not only apprehended it well but was of mind with me, that no man of conscience or any indifferent love to his country would deny to do it, and withal engage himself to find one absolute in all numbers for the purpose, which he willed me (before a gentleman of good credit, who is my testimony) to signify to your Lordship in his name.

It falls out since, that that party will not be found (for so he returns answer), upon which I have made attempts in other places, but can speak with no one in person (all being either removed or so concealed upon this present mischief), but by second means I have received answers of doubts and difficulties that they well make it a question to the arch-priest with such like suspensions. So that to tell your Lordship the plainly my heart; I think they are all so enweaved in it that it will make 500 gentlemen less of the religion, within this week, if they carry their understanding about them.

For myself, if I had been a priest, I would have put on wings to such an occasion and have thought no adventure, where I might have done (besides His Majesty and my country) all Christianity so good service. And so much have I sent to some of them; if it shall please your Lordship, I shall yet make further trial. You cannot, in the meantime, be provided. I do not only, with all readiness, offer my services but will perform it with as much integrity as your particular favour, or His Majesty's right in any subject he hath can exact. Your honour's most perfect servant and lover.

Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson's letter was not written from a prisoner, but from a spy, perhaps imprisoned a little more than he cared for, who would wish to perform his duties in freedom outside the Tower walls, instead of within; certainly it was not the letter of a voluntary prisoner. His reference to the extent of capability (if only he were a priest) in betraying the faithful, suggests that he was even willing to undertake the villainous part of entering the priesthood still more effectually to betray those who went to him in confession. Hepworth Dixon writes Ben Jonson was "born a Calvinist, became a Catholic. After the Powder Plot he joined the Court religion and helped in hunting down his colleagues." ²²⁸

Two questions could be asked. One, did Ben Jonson's friend (Shakespere) ever assist in the intelligence service to capture the Gunpowder plotters? And two, did the "Sweet Swan" also help to hunt down their colleagues like Rare Ben did?

²²⁷ Original spelling has been kept.

²²⁸ Royal Windsor, Vol. IV. 92.

Let us not forget that the amount of £440 which Shakespere needed (today's currency £40,000) to buy the unexpired term of the moiety of the tithe-lease of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe, would have been generated from some lucrative source. From historical records of accounts, the intelligent service was not generous to its spies in the Elizabethan era; however, in the Jacobean era, and under the effects of a Gunpowder Plot, King James and his royal purse would not have been stingy to capture the plotters. Cecil was a master in manipulating the actors and the authors to masquerade as Catholics to gain confessions; the consequences was the eventual confiscation of their lands if found guilty of treason. These proceeds could very well be the source of Shakespere's payment for his tithe-lease at Stratford. Certain it is that Shakespere's chief friends and patrons, many of whom were his relations, belonged to the Catholic faith, and he had a very close connection with the so-called conspirators upon whom Cecil so adroitly sprung the Gunpowder Plot, which it is not unlikely was his own invention, created in order to enable him to destroy the Catholics, because James, through Cecil's persecution of the Catholics, was, like his predecessor, becoming truly obnoxious to the country. Cecil was actually wringing from them for the Treasury some £360,000 a year. James was a very weak man, and had he given way, in all probability Cecil and the other devout Protestants, who had gorged themselves with church property, might have been called upon to disgorge it. This convenient stalking horse of 'No Popery' had always been sufficient as it was in the revolution of 1688, to drive the people out of their senses, and so to obtain a fresh lease of church revenues, under the pretence of fostering liberty.

There are more peculiar connections between the persons who eulogized William Shakespeare in the First Folio with the secret service. By the year 1576, Anthony Munday (1553–1633) became an apprentice to a London stationer (John Alde)²²⁹ in August 24 of that year. Munday also had become a seeker of recusants under the wing of Richard Topcliffe (1532–1604) the Elizabethan torturer, who officially employed Munday in 1582.

In 1581, Munday testifies as chief witness, together with George Eliot, at the trial of Edmund Campion (1540–1581)²³⁰ providing insufficient evidence taken almost directly from his work, entitled: *English Romayne Life*. The prosecuting officers for the crown were the Edmund Anderson (Queen's Serjeant), Popham (afterwards Chief Justice), and Egerton (afterwards the first Lord Ellesmere). Topcliffe described Munday to Puckering as a man who wants no sort of wit, "but an agent of Walsingham found it necessary on one occasion to reprove the misplaced zeal which led him to lay hands upon £40, the property of a widow, whose strong-box he had searched for Agnus Deis and hallowed grains."²³¹

Nevertheless, Munday's services were sufficiently satisfactory to secure his appointment as one of the messengers of Elizabeth's chamber in 1584. "Anthony Munday," Lee tells us, was

²²⁹ Alde was fined in 1577 for keeping some unknown apprentice without registering his name to the Stationers' Company, and later fined in 1578 for "printing ijij ballades for Edward White and Mundaines Dreame for hymselfe without lycence."

²³⁰ Campion was executed on December 1.

²³¹ Harl. MS. 6998, f. 31; State Papers, Dom. 1590; undated papers, 138 A, cited in Simpson, Edmund Campion, 312, 383.

“probably connected with William Mundy and John Mundy, who were attached to the royal household.”²³² By 1588, Munday was involved in the Marprelate attacks, and is named in the tract, entitled: *Just Censure and Reprofe* in which Bishop Whitgift is ridiculed when addressing Munday.

In 1590, the year of Walsingham’s death, Munday was spying on booksellers, and was also involved (after the Gunpowder Plot in April 1606), with a Richard Vaughan (Bishop of London), who commissioned Munday and two other “pursuivants” to search the boroughs of Warwickshire for Catholic priests. By 1611, Munday testifies against the suspected Puritan Hugh Holland (1574–1633), a poet mostly known for his sonnet in the First Folio (1623).

To believe that Protestantism could by any possibility have nourished so great a genius as Shakespeare is to be believed as an absurdity by this anonymous writer: “Shakespeare was not the first fruits of Protestantism, but one of the last legacies of Catholicity.”²³³ Dr. E. von Vehse, in his *Shakespeare als Protestant, Politiker, Psycholog*, that was published in 1851, offers an opinion to exactly the opposite: “Above all, was Shakespeare a thorough Protestant in the matter of private judgment and self-reliance? Especially was he opposed to the stiff external formalities of Priest craft, as displayed by the Romish Church of his time? The great apostle of self-government in religion, he was in politics an aristocratic whig.”

And finally closing this subject, we mention how Birch published in 1848 his *Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakspeare* where he had done his best to prove Shakespeare “an unprincipled debauchee and an atheist” just like Marlowe had been accused to have been.

IV

Journey to London

Of yet another peculiarity in Shakespere’s life, comes in this next subject, and how biographers inform us the actor fled his hometown due to some prosecution regarding his deer-stealing ventures. Many biographers are unable to account for his journey to London, except by maintaining it arose from these adventures.²³⁴ We investigated, as best we could; this was only because of the immense lack of recorded evidence which this deer-stealing story falls upon. The story entails a lost ballad satirizing Sir Thomas Lucy, which was found and is given.

Ballad supposedly written by Shakespeare
Against Sir Thomas Lucy
Undated

A parliament member, a justice of peace.
At home a poor scarecrow, in London an ass,

²³² Stephen and Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1909), Vol. XIII. 1188.

²³³ Anonymous writer in “The Rambler.”

²³⁴ Charles Frederick Green, Shakespeare’s Crab-Tree (London: Thomas Hailes Lacy). Undated publication.

If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

He thinks himself great, yet an ass in his state
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate;
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

He's a haughty proud insolent knight of the shire
At home nobody loves, yet there's many him fear.
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

To the sessions he went and did sorely complain
His park had been robbed and his deer they were slain.
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

He said 'twas a riot his men had been beat,
His venison was stole and clandestinely eat.
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

So haughty was he when the fact was confessed
He said 'twas a crime that could not be redressed,
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

Though Lucies a dozen he paints in his Coat
His name it shall lousy for Lucy be wrote
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

If a juvenile frolic he cannot forgive
We'll sing lousy Lucy as long as we live
If Lucy is lousy as some folk miscall it
Sing lousy Lucy whatever befall it.

This deer-stealing story is rumoured to have come originally from Thomas Jones, who lived at Turbich, a village in Worcestershire, about eighteen miles from Stratford. Jones died there in 1703, aged over ninety. He said he remembered hearing, from several old people, the story of Shakespere's robbing Lucy's park; and their account was agreed by Rowe, who added it in his biography of Shakespere of 1709, given earlier. Additionally, the ballad given above, is said to have been written by Shakespere against Lucy and then pinned it upon a park gate. The ballad

was later proved by Malone to be a forgery though he added it in the Appendix of his 1821 edition. To the author Charles Knight goes the merit of investigating clearly the whole of this deer-stealing story, because he discovered that Fulbrooke Park, where the ballad was allegedly pinned, did not come into the possession of the Lucy family till the grandson purchased it in the Reign of James I.

We found no factual evidence, that either Shakespeare (or Shakespere) had any contact with the Lucy family, outside the high treason event which was given in the previous chapter, that occurred in the Arden family. Neither could we find a trace of any deer-stealing prosecution against anyone called Shakespere or Shakespeare, either in the Records of Stratford, or the Star Chamber Records. If the story was fact, it would have been transcribed in either records stated because to steel deer was felony punishable in the Star Chamber, which was so named for a Chamber in Westminster Palace. This Court dealt with, among other things, violations of the royal prerogative and issues for which there was no applicable law. It dates from before the Tudor period, but Henry VII strengthened its powers. It had public hearings but no jury. It was typically speedier than the common courts, so people would petition to hear their cases heard there. The public records contain many notices of deer-stealing, as in 1583 when Lord Berkeley issued a Bill in the Star Chamber against twenty persons who had hunted deer unlawfully in his forests. The answer of William Weare, one of the defendants, confesses having “killed a doe, but, notwithstanding that admission, asserts that the proceedings against him were malicious and uncalled for.”²³⁵

Fosbroke (historian) mentions an anecdote tending to show that respectable persons in the county of Gloucestershire, adjoining Warwickshire, who were not ashamed of the practice of stealing deer. “According to Elizabethan law, deer-stealers were punished with three months’ imprisonment and a payment of thrice the amount of the damage done.”^{236,237} Between the years 1587 to 1614, Sir Francis Bacon was Public Prosecutor (until he became Chancellor) who had prosecuted two men for deer-stealing, as late as 1614.²³⁸ If Shakespere’s case had been sent to court, then Bacon would have prosecuted the case. There is no record in Bacon’s works, letters or any of his statements that relates to any deer-stealing prosecution he was involved in where the accused was named Shakespere or Shakespeare. Moreover, Lucy had no park impaled at Charlecote at the time of this deer-stealing story, as investigated by Knight, and the suggestion that the theft may have taken place at Fulbroke is, as Lee tells, a “pure invention.”

It is obvious from other biographers of the time, that the deer-stealing story was one more fabrication regarding Shakespere’s adventures, and there we leave it.

V

²³⁵ Preserved in the Chapter House, Westminster, xciv. 24.

²³⁶ 5 Eliz. C 21.

²³⁷ Fosbroke’s History of Gloucester, Vol I. 125.

²³⁸ W. G. Thorpe, *The Hidden Lives of Shakespeare and Bacon* (1897).

V

Which Anne?

Our next subject to investigate, occurred at the same time of the alleged deer-stealing circumstance. Biographers have Shakespere married by this time, most likely around late November 1582. We remind the reader of Rowe's statement: "Shakespere's wife was the daughter of one Hathaway." This statement was accepted without question until attention was diverted to an entry in the Bishop's Worcester Marriage Licenses.²³⁹ The license discovered, was dated November 27, 1582, made out for a couple named: "Wm Shaxpere and Annam Whateley of Temple Grafton." (Figure 14)

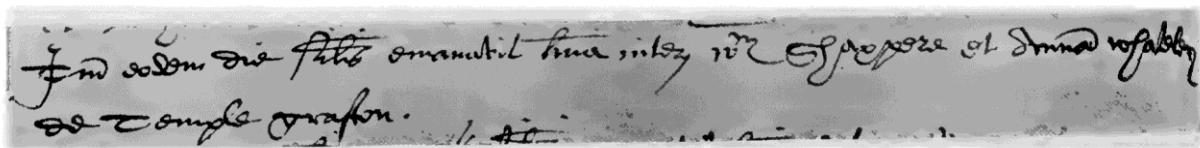


Figure 14: Marriage license for "Wm Shaxpere and Annam Whateley of Temple Grafton" registered November 27, 1582

Rev. T. P. Wadley, who discovered the Bishop's Register entry, was of the opinion that the name "Whateley" must have been an alias.²⁴⁰ The Bishop's Worcester Marriage Licenses were under the Episcopal Registers of John Whitgift (Bishop of Worcester from 1577 to 1583) when he was transferred to the See of Canterbury. The town of Worcester was 21 miles west of Stratford, and it was also where the Consistory Court was located; a court where a marriage license was issued for any local parish priest. The manor of Stratford belonged to the Bishops until 1549, when it came into the possession of Dudley, the Earl of Warwick, (afterwards Duke of Northumberland), in exchange for lands in Worcestershire.²⁴¹

In *The Life of Shakespeare* by Thomas de Quincey, the following observations are appended to an abridgment of the marriage license: "What are we to think of this document? Trepidation and anxiety are written upon its face. The parties are not to be married by a special license, not even by an ordinary license; in that case no proclamation of banns, no public asking at all, would have been requisite. Economical scruples are consulted, and yet the regular movement of the marriage 'through the bell-ropes' is disturbed. Economy, which retards the marriage, is here evidently in collision with some opposite principle which precipitates it. How is all this to be explained? Much light is afforded by the date when illustrated by another document. The bond [Figure 15] bears date on the 28th day of November, in the 25th year of our lady the queen, that is, in 1582. Now, the baptism of Shakspeare's eldest child, Susanna, is registered on the 26th of May in the year following. Strange it is, that, whilst all biographers have worked with so much zeal upon the most barren dates or most baseless traditions in the great poet's life, realizing in a manner the chimeras of Laputa, and endeavouring 'to extract sunbeams

²³⁹ Bearley Register, No. XXXII, folio 436.

²⁴⁰ Joseph William Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905).

²⁴¹ R. B. Wheller, *History & Antiquities of Stratford-upon-Avon* (Undated publication), 13.

from cucumbers,’ such a story with regard to such an event, no fiction of village scandal, but involved in legal documents, a story so significant and so eloquent to the intelligent, should formerly have been dismissed without notice of any kind; and even now, after the discovery of 1836, with nothing beyond a slight conjectural insinuation. For our parts, we should have been the last among the biographers to unearth any forgotten scandal.”

At the time this marriage license was issued, Stratfordians have their actor at the age of eighteen, and Anne Hathaway (1556–1623) at the age of twenty-six. “Though she was born two years before the registers are commenced at Stratford, to which parish the hamlet of Shottery belonged, the inscription upon her gravestone states that she was of the age of sixty-seven, which places her birth in 1556.”²⁴² Now, according to Thomas de Quincey, “tombstone inscriptions are not always trustworthy records, and that recording Anne Shakespere’s age can hardly be admitted as evidence sufficiently conclusive to bear the weight of the many assumptions based upon the disparity it indicates.”²⁴³ These inaccurate inscriptions on tombstones also led Halliwell-Phillipps, when he cited the substitution of the numeral two for eleven in the inscription on Mrs. Hall’s tombstone in the church at Stratford, to write: “The inscription here referred to having been tampered with in modern times.”²⁴⁴

If not so much credit should be put on these “tampered” tombstone inscriptions, or “not always trustworthy records,” then we need be careful in relying too much upon them as the investigation continues on this alleged marriage. “The only contemporary mention,” writes Lee, “made of the wife of Shakespere between her marriage in 1582 and her husband’s death in 1616, was as the borrower of 40s. from Thomas Whittington, who had formerly been her father’s shepherd. The money was unpaid when Whittington died in 1601, and his executor was directed to recover the sum from Shakespere and distribute it among the poor of Stratford.” It appears to have been the custom of the time, before a license for marriage could be obtained, that a marriage bond be entered by two responsible sureties at the Consistory Court; though records have been searched, no such marriage bond was found for the couple who had issued the marriage license with the names, “Wm Shaxpere and Annam Whateley of Temple Grafton.”

However, a marriage bond was found dated November 28, 1582, one day after the marriage license was registered. Be this as it may, the names are different, because the marriage bond is entered for “Willm Shagspere and Anne Hathwey;” the bride Rowe stated was Shakespere’s wife “the daughter of one Hathaway.” The bond (Figure 15) was issued by Mr. Fulke Sandells and Mr. John Richardson, who were farmers of Shottery.

The document in question was executed by Dr. Richard Cosin, a solicitor of Worcester. Gray tells us: “In Shakespeare’s day Dr. Cosin was the Judge, and the matters submitted to his decision included testamentary, matrimonial, tithe, and defamation cases, the depositions containing much interesting matter relating to the counties of Warwick and Worcester, with

²⁴² G. Russell French, *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (Cambridge University Press, 1869), part I.

²⁴³ *Shakspeare, A Biography* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1864) 45.

²⁴⁴ *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1884), Vol. II. 323.

many references to names of persons and places well known in connection with the Shakespeare families.”²⁴⁵

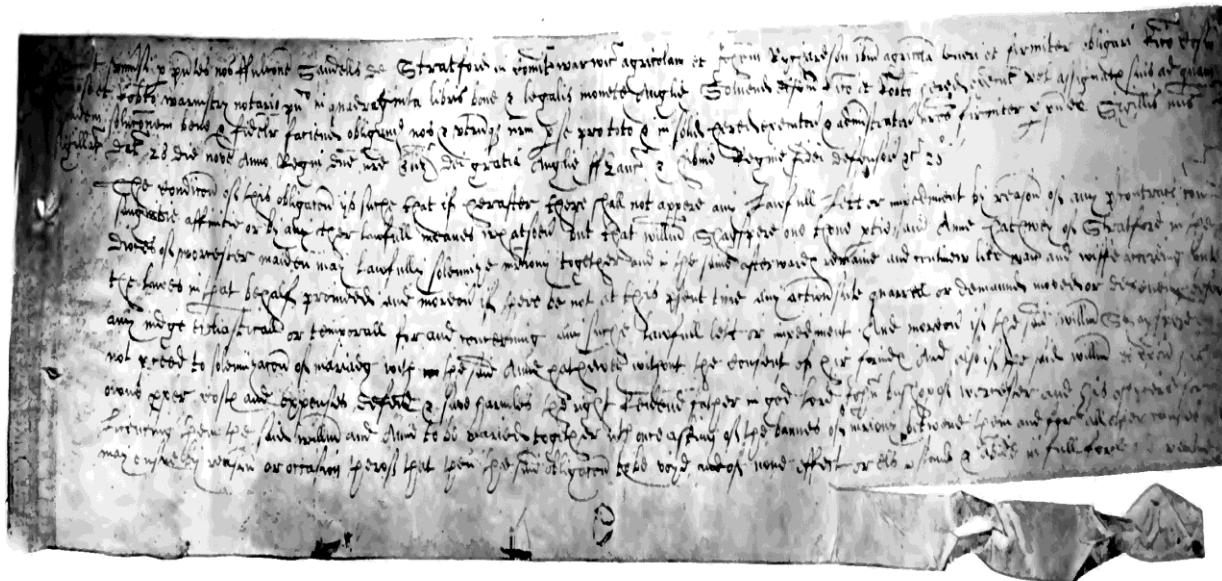


Figure 15: Marriage Bond for “Willm Shagspere and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the diocese of Worcester, maiden” entered November 28, 1582

The other executor of the bond, was Robert Warmstry, Notary and Principal Registrar for the diocese; an office which was long hereditary in his family, and the document was drawn up according to the precise directions provided by the Canon Law. The document was discovered in 1836 by Sir Thomas Phillipps in a bundle of wills, inventories, and administration bonds, which he was calendaring at the Worcester Diocesan Registry. The document was written in the ordinary running hand of the period on an oblong sheet of vellum, a narrow strip at the lower right hand corner having been cut and knotted for the reception of the wax upon which the seals were impressed. In 1841 it was taken from the file for the convenience of many who desired to inspect it, and translated as follows:

The condition of this obligation is such that if hereafter there shall not appear any lawful let or impediment by reason of any pre-contract consanguinity affinity or by any other lawful means whatsoever but that William Shagspere one, the one party, and Anne Hathwey of Stratford in the Diocese of Worcester maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together and in the same afterwards remain and continue like man and wife according unto the laws in that behalf provided and moreover if there be not at this present time any action suit quarrel or demand moved or depending before any judge ecclesiastical or temporal for and concerning any such lawful let or impediment. And moreover if the said William Shagspere do not proceed to solemnization of marriage with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of her friends. And also if the said William do upon his own proper costs and expenses defend and save harmless the right Rev. Father in

²⁴⁵ Shakespeare’s Marriage (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905).

God Lord John Bishop of Worcester and his officers for licensing them the said William and Anne to be married together with once asking of the banns of matrimony,²⁴⁶ between them and for all other causes which may ensue by reason or occasion thereof that then the said obligation to be void and of none effect or else to stand and abide in full force and virtue.

Suspicion could be put on either of these documents: That they were created by Ireland or other forgers. This suspicion, however, can be removed by a comparison of the bond with those of the same period, and no doubt this was done; if not, a crude error indeed it would have been. In regards to the issue of the marriage license, it is placed beyond dispute, by the Bishop's Register Record,²⁴⁷ to have existed prior to any knowledge of a marriage bond; therefore, forgery is fairly out of the question, at least for the marriage license.

As we see, we have one marriage license and one marriage bond. The problem is, that both couples mentioned in these documents have different names: A marriage license is missing for the couple named "Anne Hathwey and Willm Shagspere," and a marriage bond is missing for the couple named "Annam Whateley and Wm Shaxpere."

Note is made on the term of the bride as "maiden" in the marriage bond. Anne Hathaway was "six months short by one week," to giving birth to a baby girl christened on May 26, 1583. De Quincey states that it was barely possible for the marriage to have been solemnized before December 1, 1582,²⁴⁸ though Lee thinks the actor had to be forced into marrying, later trying to desert the intended bride before marriage as he did in effect desert her afterwards when he travelled to London. In any case, all evidence, except that of the Bishop's Register, are in favour of the name given in the bond as being Shakespere's bride: "Anne Hathwey: maiden," which effectually disposed any theory that she had been previously married. If the bride's maiden-name was "Hathwey," the author C. H. Dall had noted, "Anne may have been a ward or niece, and the seal attached to the bond must have been borrowed. As far as can be inferred from known facts, Anne Hathaway was an orphan, whose connection with Shottery has been assumed. I draw attention to the fact that Anne Hathaway could not have been the daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery."

The records show Anne's father (Richard Hathaway) was a substantial yeoman, farming his own land at Shottery, only a mile from Stratford. His grandson with the same name is styled "Gentleman," who became High bailiff of Stratford in 1626. In the Warwickshire Survey, in the time of King Philip and Queen Mary, it is recited that "John Hathaway held property at Shottery, by copy of Court Roll, dated April 20, 1542." In the *English Encyclopedia*, this same person is noted as the "probable father of Richard, whose daughter Anne married the poet; and that there was an early intimacy between the two families is evinced by John Shakespere becoming a bondman for Richard Hathaway in 1566."

²⁴⁶ Meaning: John Shakespere may not, up to that time, have given consent to his son's marriage.

²⁴⁷ The Act and Deposition books are records of the proceedings of the Worcester Consistory Court, which was formerly held at the Western end of the South aisle of the Cathedral.

²⁴⁸ Shakespeare a Biography (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1864), 43.

Richard Hathaway died in 1582 and bequeathed considerable property (according to the time) to his children; to his eldest son (Bartholomew) the farm; to his second and third sons (Thomas, born April 12, 1569, and John, born February 3, 1574), £6. 13s. 4d. each; to his fourth son (William, born November 30, 1578), £10. To his daughters, he left Agnes and Catherine each £6. 13s. 4d. to be paid on the day of their marriage; and to his youngest daughter Margaret the sum of £6. 13s. 4d. to be paid when she was seventeen. There is no mention of a daughter called "Anne" in Richard Hathaway's last Will & Testament, that was witnessed by Sir William Gilbert, clerk and curate of Stratford, and taken from the Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House; probate was granted to Joan Hathaway, the widow, at London, in July 9, 1582.

As is the case of Shakespeare's biographers, this omission of a name of "Anne," was put down to some "clerical error." They further tell us, that the name "Agnes" meant "Anne;" though Grey offers a theory how "the two names were, at that period, sometimes interchangeable. With the exception of the absence of the name Anne from Richard Hathaway's will, and of the name Agnes from all undoubted references to Shakespeare's wife, there is nothing in the traditional or other evidence against the theory that she was Richard's daughter." Further down, the same author offers another theory, that Anne may have been Richard's sister and not his daughter: "If the age on Anne Shakespeare's tombstone is correct, [we saw the discrepancies of such inscriptions earlier,] she was born about 1556, at which date John Hathaway was still tenant of the Hewland farm; so that she may have been his daughter, and therefore Richard's sister. This would explain the omission of her name from the will, and is in agreement with the tradition that she resided at the house now known as Anne Hathaway's cottage."

Yeatman commented on Lee's suggestion, which was: "Agnes and Anne were sometimes used for the same person; but it was not invariable, and the chances are against such an identity; but assuming it possible, what evidence is there of the identity of Agnes, daughter of Richard Hathaway, with the poet's wife? The house at Shottery, now called Hathaway's cottage, undoubtedly belonged to the Hathaway family; but there is not a title of proof that the poet's wife ever had any connection with it, and the pious belief has been created apparently to secure American dollars, for which it is very convenient."²⁴⁹

Stopes mentions "Richard Hathaway of Shottery (for whom John Shakespere had stood surety in 1566) had made his will on September 1, 1581, and died between that time and July 9, 1582, when it was proved, leaving his daughter Agnes (or Anne) the small but very common marriage portion of £6. 13s. 4d."²⁵⁰ More conjecture is applied by Stopes to Hathaway's decent: "The Hathaways from whom Anne Shakespere descended have not been proved to be of the Gloucestershire stock, nor is it absolutely certain to which of the three Shottery families she belonged." Shakespere does not mention any of his wife's relatives in his will, "but that does not necessarily imply coldness of feeling;" and Halliwell-Phillipps gives Hathaway as an illiterate, since "it seems to be very doubtful whether Anne herself could write, for no evidence

²⁴⁹ Is William Shakespeare's Will Holographic? (The "Saturday Review" 1906).

²⁵⁰ Shakespeare's Family (London: Elliot Stock, 1901), 38.

of her calligraphy has been produced, and we know that one of her brothers was not versed in that science.”²⁵¹

In a letter to “The Athenaeum” of July 17, 1886, an author (Hall) suggested this possibility: “Richard Hathaway, alias Gardener of Shottery, who died in 1582, may have married a widow named Whateley from Temple Grafton, which would then be Anne Hathaway’s birthplace. This assumption would account for Anne’s known seniority to the surviving Hathaways and for her exclusion from the father’s last will.” In commenting upon Hall’s letter, the editor noted: “No amount of ingenuity will ever convert the Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton of one day, into the Anne Hathaway of Stratford of the next.” Logical assumption of the editor.

In Appleton’s Journal is this comment: “The little cottage at Shottery, so long worshiped of tourists as the courting ground of great Shakespere, may have to go into the limbo of exploded myths. Richard Hathaway of Shottery (owner of the cottage whose glories now bid fair to fade) in his last will dated September 1, 1581, bequeathed his property to seven children, among other provisions, giving £6. 13s. to his daughter Agnes, and as no Anne was mentioned (the other daughters being Catharine and Margaret), Agnes has invariably been supposed a clerical error for Anne. But Shakespeare study is fast being guided by modern students into the paths of commonsense, and the convenient presumption that everything not accordant with the glib biographer of the greatest Englishman who ever lived, was a ‘clerical error’ is about to be pensioned off forever.”²⁵²

Charles Elton explains the Canon Law as it was in force in England in the year 1582: “We may say at once that there is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare and his wife had made an irregular or clandestine marriage, though they appear to have been united by a civil marriage some time before the ceremony was performed in the face of the church. We should distinguish between regular and irregular contracts. A contract of future espousals was regular, but it did not amount to marriage, being nothing more in reality than a mutual covenant to be married at a future time. A contract of present espousals, on the contrary, was a legal marriage. The congregation was frequently warned that such civil marriages ought to be contracted publicly, and before several witnesses. If these rules were broken, the offenders were liable to the punishments for clandestine marriage, such as fine, imprisonment, or excommunication and the victim might be compelled to walk, like the Duchess of Gloucester, in a white sheet, with bare feet and a taper alight. Civil marriage required the religious solemnity to give the parties their legal status as to property, but otherwise it was both valid and regular. Clandestine marriage was valid, but all parties could be punished for their offences against the law.”²⁵³

After some research into the Canon Law, we traced necessary documents which were needed for a common marriage license in the Elizabethan era.

²⁵¹ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847), 294.

²⁵² Appleton’s Journal “The Shakespearean Myth” (New York: February-June, 1879).

²⁵³ William Shakespeare, his Family & Friends (New York: E. P. Dutton Publishing, 1904).

(a) An Allegation.

The earliest marriage allegation preserved at Worcester is dated 1661; there can be little doubt that similar documents were prepared for the signature of the applicants during Bishop Whitgift's episcopate. The allegation would be sworn from the applicant, stating the name, residence, and occupation of each of the parties and of the parents, guardians, or friends giving consent, and the reason why the full publication of banns was to be dispensed with, or why permission was required to marry in a parish which was not the ordinary residence of the bride or bridegroom.

No sixteenth century Worcester allegations are preserved; therefore, we do not know if such an allegation was arranged for Shakespere and Hathaway (or Whateley). "For biographical purposes, the allegation was by far the most important of the series," Gray tells us. "And it is unfortunate that no record of this kind for a date earlier than 1660 has been preserved in the Worcester muniments room, which have been too thoroughly searched to encourage the hope that any such document or much of the information it contained will now be recovered."²⁵⁴

(b) A Bond.

This document would assure the Bishop and his officials from any action or suit arising out of the grant of the marriage license. There must be no legal impediment to the marriage. No suit alleging an impediment must exist. The bridegroom must not proceed to marriage without the consent of the bride's "friends" and must guarantee the Bishop and his officers against any penalty resulting from the issue of the license.²⁵⁵

Mr. Coote, of the Doctors' Commons (an archaeologist of his time) wrote that in respect of the law, such a marriage bond would have been required should some irregularity be seen in the marriage. The only irregularity in this alleged marriage would have been the young age of the groom, since Shakespere was only eighteen. "Where the applicant of the license was under age he could not legally execute a bond, and therefore some person duly qualified was substituted, and gave the security, being himself, as the other would have been, served with a bondsman."²⁵⁶ The stipulation in the bond for "once asking of the banns of matrimony between them," is regarded by Coote as proof that John Shakespere (the father) had not, up to that time, given consent to his son's marriage.

"Nothing," Grey writes, "is known concerning this part of the license transaction save the fact that the bond bears the marks of the sureties, Sandells and Richardson. In the present state of our information it is not expedient to do more than suggest probabilities, which will be of little assistance to the biographer."²⁵⁷

Stopes explains the marriage bond irregularity in a more romantic style, and is worth giving: "Travelling was inconvenient on November roads; Shakspeare set out for the license alone, as bridegrooms were often wont to do, when they could afford the expense of a special license.

²⁵⁴ Joseph William Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905), 11.

²⁵⁵ Ch. Elton, *William Shakespeare, his Family & Friends* (New York: E. P. Dutton Publishing, 1904), 32.

²⁵⁶ G. Russell French, *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (Cambridge University Press, 1869), part I.

²⁵⁷ *Shakespeare's Marriage* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905), 18.

He might give his own name, and that of his intended wife, at a temporary address. The clerk made an error in the spelling, which might have been corrected; but meanwhile discovered that he was under age, was acting without his parents, that the bride was not in her own home, and that no marriage settlement was in the air. No risk might be run by an official in such a case; the license was stayed; sureties must be found for a penalty in case of error. Anne Hathaway's father had died in the summer of 1582. It is probable that the betrothal would therefore be a quiet one. It is also more than likely that she went to reside with a friend or relative after her father's death, and that this caused the confusion in the address in the marriage bond. The bridegroom in general only required one guarantee for a bond of the kind; but being under age, the one became his representative, and the other guarantor for that representative.”²⁵⁸ It is a very romantic theory.

The problems with this stipulate, in order a marriage license is issued, is that though there is a marriage bond, it does not seem that a marriage license followed for the same couple inscribed on the bond as “Willm Shagspere and Anne Hathwey.”

(c) A letter.

This letter would need to be from some person of position known to the Bishop or his officials and to the parties and their friends, certifying that no impediment existed and that the license could be granted. Assurance of consent was sometimes included in this certificate. We have no record of this letter for Shakespere and Hathaway (or Whateley).

(d) A Sworn Allegation.

This would have been prepared by the applicant for a license, probably setting out the names, residences, and occupations of the parties and their parents or guardians, and the reasons from desiring a dispensation, and “a fee, varying from about 3s. 8d. to 10s. 4d. according to the nature of the dispensation.”²⁵⁹

On the subject of the cost of marriage licenses (at the date of the Shakespere grant) there is no definite information. In the Articles agreed upon at Convocation in 1575, a fee of 10s., is termed for licenses to marry without banns granted at the Archbishop's Faculty Office for the provinces of Canterbury and York. A fee of four pence was also payable to the Keeper of the Seal.²⁶⁰

There is no trace of a sixteenth century Worcester sworn allegation preserved; therefore, we do not know if such a document was ever admitted for Shakespere and Hathaway (or Whateley).

²⁵⁸ Shakespeare's Family (London: Elliot Stock, 1901).

²⁵⁹ E. K. Chambers, The Works of William Shakespeare (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1901), Vol. I.

²⁶⁰ Joseph William Gray, Shakespeare's Marriage (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905).

(e) The license.

It would be addressed to the minister of the church in which the ceremony was to be performed. Elton writes: "We do not know where the marriage took place. If it had been at Stratford, it would have been entered in the paper book then used as a register, and would have been copied into the existing parchment book, besides being recorded in the transcripts from time to time forwarded to Worcester. As Shakespere's place of residence is not mentioned in the bond, it is possible that he was living for the time at Weston, or some other place in the neighbourhood. The wedding ceremony may have been actually performed at Weston; but there are no registers of that parish for the date in question, and no transcripts for the same period have as yet been discovered at Gloucester."²⁶¹

There are three parishes named in the marriage bond. The registers of two of them have been searched, and searched in vain by past researchers. The register of the third (that of Luddington, which is close by Shottery) was destroyed long ago in a fire that burnt down Luddington church. The bond, however, "contains no reference to the church appointed for the marriage, the only parish named being Stratford, residence of the sureties and of Anne Hathaway."²⁶² But this cannot direct us further, because that Anne Hathaway came from Luddington, was just an assumption by Malone in 1821.

Richard Savage had discovered that two leaves of the marriage register of St. Martin's, Worcester, for the date of Shakespere's wedding, had been "conveniently cut out;" and the register of Temple Grafton of this period is lost.²⁶³

The conclusion is this: There is no recorded marriage ceremony for Shakespere and Hathaway (or Whateley). No entry of Shakespeare's marriage occurs in the Stratford register, and "he must therefore have been married elsewhere in the diocese of Worcester, unless we suppose that when the copy of that register was made in 1600, the original entries not being now extant, some may have been accidentally omitted. This conjecture is mentioned with diffidence, for the authenticity of every page of the register up to that period, is attested by the signatures of the vicar and churchwardens." When Halliwell-Phillipps wrote this, he, as Malone, ignored the fact that these registers are written in the same handwriting from the first entry March 25, 1558, to September 14, 1600. The former continues to tell us, "it is also possible he was married at a village where the early registers have been lost, for a letter addressed to the clergy of the parishes in Warwickshire, where those as early as 1582 are preserved, did not succeed in producing the desired information."²⁶⁴

We can give our readers many more quotes, statements, theories, assumptions, and possibilities from various biographers and writers; but it will not help us learn the truth. Nevertheless, we have added the various conjectures on this subject in Appendix B.

²⁶¹ William Shakespeare, his Family & Friends (New York: E. P. Dutton Publishing, 1904).

²⁶² William Winter, Gray Days and Gold (New York: MacMillan & Co., 1899).

²⁶³ Richard Savage and Edgar I. Fripp, Minutes & Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-Upon-Avon & other Records 1577–1586 (Oxford: Dugdale Society, 1926), Vol. III. iv.

²⁶⁴ J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).



Hathaway: Are we married think you?

Shaksper: Truly, I...I...I...think we are.

Figure 16: Caricature sketch by Arthur Moreland (1915)

Though Shakespere's alleged marriage bond is connected to Bishop Whitgift's actions, the latter is also connected with William Shakespeare's affairs. As Archbishop of Canterbury, Whitgift was authorized to license books and pamphlets under the injunctions issued by Elizabeth on coming to the throne. After his translation from Worcester to Canterbury in 1583, he sent out certain articles, including one "against printing and publishing of books and pamphlets without license of the Archbishop or Bishop."²⁶⁵ In 1593, *Venus and Adonis*, which was published by Richard Field, was licensed by the Archbishop Whitgift and entered in the Stationers' Register.²⁶⁶ That Whitgift probably made himself acquainted with the nature of the poem (dedicated to Southampton) is indicated by his close personal oversight of books and pamphlets entered with the Stationers' Company as we see from two entries in the Warden Accounts of July 10, 1587: "12s. laid out in charges to procure a copy for my Lord of Canterbury of a Popish book which was in printing. Item paid for going and coming by water to Lambeth several times and for other business about the Company's affairs at that time. Item paid in search at Billingsgate for books that came out of Scotland being in barrels and in

²⁶⁵ John Strype, Annals Life of Whitgift (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1724), Vol. I. 232.

²⁶⁶ Fo. 297b.

firkins delivered to my Lord's Grace (of Canterbury)." Appending to this second entry, is a note by Dr. Arber: "This and other like entries show that Archbishop Whitgift kept the officers of the Company pretty busy at work." ²⁶⁷

Scholars, biographers, and authors have finally settled on the matter: Shakespere married Anne Hathaway, and after their marriage, Anne left Hewland Farm where she was residing and moved in to John Shakespere's house on Henley Street. For reasons unknown and unrecorded, based purely on biographers' imagination, her arrival bothered the tenant in the house, who was William Burbage. So a dispute began, and John refused to release Burbage from his lease, so Burbage decided to take the matter to a London court. On July 24, 1582, four months after any marriage license or bond was entered, solicitors representing both sides met and resolved the matter: John Shakespere would release William Burbage from his lease. If anything, this fable, as to Anne residing at her father-in-law's residence, does not coincide with the dates on the marriage license and/or bond with the dates of the court case when Burbage was released from his lease. Somewhere, someone, mixed up their dates.

The theory that the marriage took place without John Shakespere's consent involves the assumption that the sureties and others concerned in the application joined in a conspiracy to obtain the license by fraud, and represented that Shakespere was of full age or that the requisite consent had been obtained. "That the registry officials were deceived by a misstatement as to his age or by means of a forged certificate of his father's consent is exceedingly improbable." Says Grey. We may ask, why it should be "exceedingly improbable" that these registry officials were "deceived by a misstatement as to his age" since we are told that they were obviously short-sighted and nincompoops enough to write Whateley instead of Hathaway? And Grey concludes his statement by saying: "The sureties could hardly have been blind to the consequences, and the interest of Sandells and Richardson in the affairs of the bride or her family would have been great indeed to induce them to undertake such a responsibility." As far as these responsibilities go which Grey imposes upon us, there would not have been a penalty on anybody's behalf. The only penalty would have been on behalf of the couple which, according to Grey, "would probably have been no more severe than a fine or penance, but with a dispensation to remain in a state of matrimony." ²⁶⁸

On the other hand, had the actual ceremony been performed by a Catholic priest, it must have been secretly and clandestinely performed, since at that date, Catholic priests were living in priest-holes if within the Realm at all, and were inhibited from the performance of any religious or any other function. If performed by a Protestant clergyman it would have been registered in the Book of Marriages of Trinity Parish, certainly of some parish somewhere.

Lee would glide out of the difficulty by simply assuming that Anne Whateley married another Shakespere. But this explanation raises mountains of improbability "beside which the difficulty itself is a molehill." Writes Morgan. "No Anne Whateley ever married a William Shakespeare. No William Shakespeare and his bride Whateley ever married, and then a

²⁶⁷ Transcript, Vol. I. 520, 526, 567.

²⁶⁸ Shakespeare's Marriage (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905).

l'instant disappeared leaving no rack or shadow or adumbration behind that the combing of records and possibilities for three centuries can find a trace of.”²⁶⁹

After all the investigation done, and all that has been said of this alleged marriage, the registers depicting these incomprehensible irregularities, can only be contributed to suspicious register entries.

VI

John Shakespere's Religion

It is inevitable to remain distant from the religious concepts at this point, which allows us to return to this subject in a brief description of events. Bishop Whitgift, in 1581, had under examination, or to be more specific under torture, many who were regarded papists; families in Worcester and the rest of his diocese were named on so-called “certificates,”²⁷⁰ and up to 1579, one third of the Magistrates of Warwickshire were pronounced to be Catholics.²⁷¹ In 1575, John Shakespere begins to sell and mortgage his property. “For some reason not now known, his circumstances did not improve after 1575, in which year, when Shakespere was eleven, he gave £40 for the two houses in Henley Street.”²⁷²

In 1577, the father was assessed at a lower rate than the other Aldermen, and by the following year, he was not rated for the poor at all, so by 1579 his name occurs among the defaulters for the armour and weapon tax, and in the spring of the same year he mortgaged the revenue of his wife's property to one of her relations for £40, and sold some of his property at Snitterfield for £4. “These facts may point to real losses in trade or to a practice common with suspected recusants.” Bowden said. “By which, to escape from the grasp of the penal laws, they conveyed their property to trustworthy persons by colourable mortgages and sales, while retaining themselves the income.”²⁷³

The list of recusants in which John Shakespere's name appears was collected by the Commissioners (Sir Thomas Lucy and others) who furnished it under the appointment of the Recusancy Act of 1592.²⁷⁴ The parliament which passed the Act only sat three months, from February 19, 1592 till April 10, 1593.²⁷⁵ The State Papers,²⁷⁶ and the Hist. MS. Com. Salisbury, show clearly that during the year of 1591, in November to be exact, to the following year, how the country was sifted and searched for the discovery of papists. At the head of the second Commission is our very own Sir Thomas Lucy together with our Sir Fulke Greville. They were

²⁶⁹ Appleton Morgan, Mrs. Shakespeare's Second Marriage (New York: Unionist–Gazette Association, 1926).

²⁷⁰ (a) John Strype, Annals Life of Whitgift (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1724), Vol. I. 189; (b) The Religion of Shakespeare (London: Burns & Gates, 1899): “Some believe that Shakespere's mother was undoubtedly a Catholic, though the author Carter pictures her ‘as a strict Puritan, teaching her son the Holy Scriptures from the Geneva Bible,’ disregarding the fact that she could neither read or write.”

²⁷¹ John Strype, Annals Life of Whitgift (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1724), Vol. I. 67.

²⁷² J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

²⁷³ Henry Sebastian Bowden, The Religion of Shakespeare (London: Burns & Gates, 1899).

²⁷⁴ Act 35 Eliz. c. I.

²⁷⁵ The Statutes at large from Edward IV to the end of Elizabeth I.

²⁷⁶ Dom. Eliz., ccxl., ccxli., ccxliii.

both active persecutors of the papists, and the lineal descendants of those very men whom in 1557 imprisoned Sir Robert Cotton for defending the “ancient faith.”

The second certificate of the Commissioners for the county of Warwickshire touching all persons as either have been presented to them, or have been otherwise found out by the endeavour of the Commissioners to be Jesuit seminary priests, fugitives, or recusants, within the county of Warwick, “or vehemently suspected to be such, together with a true note of so many of them as are already indicted for their obstinate and willful persisting in their recusancy,” was set in Warwick, September 25 “in the 34th year of her Majesty’s most happy Reign, and sent up to the Lordships of her Majesty’s most honourable Privy Council.”²⁷⁷

The list mentioned, was divided into five sections: The first list contains the names of those who have been indicted for persisting in their “recusancy.” The second list contains the names “of such dangerous and seditious papists and recusants as have been presented to us, or found out by our endeavour to have been at any time of, or in the county of Warwickshire, and are now either beyond the seas or vagrants within the Realm.” The third list contains “the names of recusants heretofore presented in the county, but now dwelling elsewhere, or gone away on just occasion, or lurking unknown in other counties.” The fourth list contains “the names of recusants heretofore presented,” who are thought to forbear the church for “debt and fear of process or for some worse faults, or for age, sickness, or impotency of body.”

It is in the fourth list where we find John Shakespere’s name together with eight other names, charged with “recusancy.” They are: Mr. John Wheeler; John Wheeler his son; Mr. John Shakespeare; Mr. Nicholas Barneshurst; Thomas James (alias Giles); William Bainton; Richard Harrington; William Fluellen; and, George Bardolph.

Halliwell-Phillipps expresses his doubt of John Shakespere’s name in this fourth list: “How far it may be said to prove him distinctly a recusant is a question that must be left to be decided hereafter by evidence not now known.”²⁷⁸ All names in the list were supposed to have abstained from church for fear of process for debt, which Carter (author) asserts to be composed of puritan not papist recusants; for “papists,” he says, “were persecuted for being papists, not for forbearing attendance at the parish church.”²⁷⁹ As to the final and fifth list, it gives the names of those who have already conformed or promised conformity.

The leader of the Protestant party in Shakespere’s county was the new upstart favourite of the time, Dudley, the Earl of Leicester. “Absolutely devoid of principle, religious or other, and at times indeed favourable to Catholics, as for instance in his relations with Campion, he found it to his interests in Warwickshire to play the part of a zealous puritan; and he thus secured the support of the Grenvilles, Lucys, the Combes, the Porters and others, all zealous adherents of the new religion. Leicester’s iniquities, his criminal relations with the Lady Sheffield and Lady Essex, his murder of both their husbands and of his own wife [Amy Robsart] at Cumnor, were

²⁷⁷ Recusancy Act of 1592: Act 35 Eliz. c. I.

²⁷⁸ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

²⁷⁹ Hist. MSS. Com. Salisbury, part IV. 164.

condoned or ignored by his partisans, in return for his puritan zeal. Not so, however, with the Catholics, and conspicuous among them in his sturdy independence was Edward Arden, the Squire of Parkhall, and the cousin of Shakespere's mother. Edward Arden refused to wear the Earl's livery, and openly expressed his disgust at the Earl's infamies. Arden was supported in his contest by the prayers and good wishes of all that was respectable in the county, but the Earl had the machinery of Cecil's statecraft at his command, and knew how to use it.”²⁸⁰

An act of treason in the Arden family was related earlier, so it will not be repeated here. But it is at the same time of this act of treason (1583) when the trials of the case were being conducted, that all biographers of Shakespere agree upon, was when the young lad was forced to leave Stratford, though they tend to blame the flee on some deer-stealing tale.

VII

Shakespere's Funeral

We now turn to another subject, which is of relevance. This would be of Shakespere's funeral. In the ancient Parish-Register, that could be doubted if it is genuine as stated earlier in this work, there is a brief and conventional entry setting the fact of his burial being on April 25, 1616, and that is all. It is difficult to believe that there was not one able pen in England that could not have given some justice to that solemn scene at the time; Ben Jonson's would have been one of them. At a later date, many memorial writings in memory of the Stratford actor (presumably the Bard) tumbled down from various sources, yet at the time of the actor's death not one was commissioned to honour his life and eulogize his death. But this can be debated upon, since many other eminent poets were not eulogized in their death by fellow poets at the time. Whatever of conjecture as to what friends were summoned to the obsequies of the greatest man in Stratford, (and that he had nothing but friends and no enemies there, we must conclude from all the chronicles) whether Heminges or Condell or Ben Jonson, or any of his associates in the London theatre, must remain pure conjectures forever.²⁸¹

There is also an adventurous event to the excavation of the actor's grave, which was in the summer of 1796. In digging a vault in the immediate locality, an opening appeared which was presumed to indicate the site of some remains. Henry Irving's account follows of that venture:

The most scrupulous care, however, was taken not to disturb the neighbouring earth in the slightest degree, the clerk having been placed there until the brickwork of the adjoining vault was completed to prevent anyone making an examination. No relics whatever were visible through the small opening that thus presented itself, and as the poet was buried in the ground, not in a vault, the chancel earth, moreover, formerly absorbing a large degree of moisture, the great probability is that dust alone remains.

²⁸⁰ Henry Sebastian Bowden, *The Religion of Shakespeare* (London: Burns & Gates, 1899).

²⁸¹ Dr. A. Morgan, *Mrs. Shakespeare's Second Marriage* (New York: The Unionist-Gazette Association, 1926).

Irving, on his visit to Stratford, talked with an old sexton who kept watch for a couple of days over the aperture, learned how that vigilant sentinel had seen “nothing but dust.” As the essayist concluded, “it was something to have seen the dust of Shakespeare.” Here is an entry in the Council Records relating to Interments and burial inscriptions.²⁸²

Interments and inscriptions did not follow each other in chronological order. The fact seems to be for the sole purpose of keeping secret the exact place of a grave. We are by no means sure that there are any bones at all under the slabs. Neither names appear upon gravestones. So far as anyone knows there is not now and never has been an item of proof that those mentioned are buried where they should be.

5 Eliz. c. 21

This entry tells us much. We investigated Sir Francis Bacon’s tomb for another project, and was surprised to learn from the St. Michael Parish Commissioners in St Albans, that no body of Bacon’s nor of his mother, are buried in the churchyard or inside the chapel, as has been assumed for over 400 years. Ingleby printed a book, entitled: *Shakespeare’s Bones*, in 1883 where he says: “Shakespere’s body was carried to the grave on Thursday, April 25, 1616, (O.S.) [Old Style] and beyond question, his son-in-law, Dr. John Hall, made all the arrangements, and bore all the expenses. We have no proof whatever that the grave has remained closed from that time: On the contrary, there is some slight scintilla of proof that it has been explored; and it would never astonish me to learn that his skull had been abstracted.”²⁸³ It is a shame that Ingleby did not tell us for what purpose, he believed, the “skull had been abstracted.”

A letter from William Hall, supposedly written January 2, 1694,²⁸⁴ has context on the tomb inscription of Shakespere’s grave, that has so boggled the minds of scholars. William Hall was a Resident of Queen’s College and appears to have been a well-informed and zealous antiquary according to Halliwell-Phillipps. Though no date is inserted or docketed on the letter, the Rev. W. D. Macray (who discovered the letter in the Bodleian Library) said at the time: “The manuscript is undated, but that it was written about the beginning of December 1694, appears from a subsequent letter which contains the Staffordshire words, and which is dated at Lichfield, January 2, 1694.”²⁸⁵ Briefly stating Hall’s ventures, he came across the tomb’s inscription when he visited Stratford, and “went to visit the ashes of the great Shakespeare which lie interred in that church.” He noted the peculiar verses cut on the tombstone:

Reader, for Jesus’s sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here;
Blessed be he that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones.

The writer of the letter offers his explanation to what the inscription meant: “There is in this church a place which they call the bone-house, a repository for all bones they dig up, which are

²⁸² Modern spelling has been added.

²⁸³ (London: Trübner & Co.)

²⁸⁴ Bodleian MS., Rawlinson D. 377, fo. 90.

²⁸⁵ William Hall, Notes of Traditions (Brighton: 1884).

so many that they would load a great number of wagons. The poet, being willing to preserve his bones unmoved, lays a curse upon him that moves them, and having to do with clerks and sextons, for the most part a very ignorant sort of people, he descends to the meanest of their capacities, and disrobes himself of that art which none of his contemporaries wore in greater perfection.” Hall also mentions that the body (under the tombstone) was buried “full seventeen foot deep, deep enough to secure him;” a statement acceptable by Lee, “as the grave was made seventeen foot deep, and was never opened even to receive his wife although she expressed the desire to be buried with her husband.” Halliwell-Phillipps writes: “If a skull was found in the grave, and its formation corresponded with the monumental bust, there would be merely a confirmation of our present knowledge. If, on the contrary, the formation did not so correspond, the inference would naturally be that it was not Shakespeare’s, the evidence of the bust altogether outweighing that of a particular skull found in the grave.”²⁸⁶ Peculiar this scholar delves into such skepticism, willing to go the way in which the scale tips.

The tombstone has the following inscription: “Obiit. Ano. Doi. 1616. Åtatis 53. Die 23. Ap,” as given in Dugdale’s inscription; whilst the Parish-Records has the same year of death, and only the day of the month is different; a difference of two days. Oldys declares the actor was born on April 23, 1563, and died at the age of fifty-three, in the year 1616. He converts the day and month of the death into the day and month of the birth. Since there is no evidence, at least from the alleged Parish-Register, on what month or year the actor was born, we can only give the reader the recorded date of baptism in the same Parish-Register as being: “1564. April 26. Gulielmus filius [son to] Johannes Shakespere.”²⁸⁷ The baptism records differ from Oldys who contradicts the Parish-Register as to the year of birth. His assertions, as stated by him, have no other basis than his own misconceptions.

Rev. Joseph Greene was a native of the town of Worcestershire. He was educated at Oxford in 1734. In 1735 he was appointed master of the grammar school, and retained that office till 1771. He died in 1790. This man asserted that “Shakespere died at the age of 53.” This amounts to the allegation that the actor was “born in 1563” so he was in agreement with Oldys. They both contradict the Parish-Register as to the year of the birth without a scrap of evidence, or even the pretence of “tradition.” Malone adopted the same month, being April; however, put faith in the Parish-Register when he stated Shakespere “was born on the 23rd of April, 1564.” Though Malone gives a three-day interval, from birth to baptism, this was definitely assumed upon old ways or as they call it, “tradition.”

Collier, “the scoundrel forger” as he has been termed, had noted in 1844, that “it seems most likely that our great dramatist had been brought into the world only three days before he was baptized, and it was then the custom to carry infants very early to the font.” And Joseph Hunter, in 1845, had the same opinion: “The searchers after remarkable coincidences will be struck with the fact that Shakespere died on his birthday, and that his friend, the Earl of Pembroke, died also on his birthday, when he had lived just half a century.”

²⁸⁶ William Hall, Notes of Traditions (Brighton: 1884).

²⁸⁷ D. H. Lambert, Shakespeare Documents (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904).

Halliwell-Phillipps, in 1848 and in 1853, wrote upon more down-to-earth terms: "It is generally said he died on the anniversary of his birth, but this statement rests on a very late tradition. The earliest authority is Oldys in his manuscript where he notes Gerard Langbaine. [Historian.] At the same time it must be remarked that three days was often the period which elapsed between birth and baptism."

Knight also had to rely upon tradition and conjecture, when he wrote in 1854, that "Shakespere baptized on the 26th April, 1564. And when born? The want of such information is a defect in all Parish-Registers." Then Alexander Dyce, in 1857 and in 1864, tells us: "If we trust faint tradition that he died on the anniversary of his birth, we are to believe that he was born on the 23rd of the month; nor is the interval which this supposes between his birth and baptism inconsistent with the custom of the time."

We turned to the *Book of Common Prayer*, which was published in 1559. It reads: "The pastors and curates shall often admonish the people, that they differ not the baptism of infants any longer than the Sunday, or other Holy Day, next after the child be born, unless upon a great and reasonable cause declared to the curate, and by him approved." The admonition of this prayer book was that baptism should not be deferred any longer than the Sunday or other Holy Day next after the birth, "unless upon a great and reasonable cause declared to the curate, and by him approved." In cases of royal births, it was different; their baptisms were often delayed for weeks; but the household chaplains of the palace were always at hand, night and day, to baptize them in case of death prior to their baptism.²⁸⁸

The written accounts of those who believed Shakespere born at Stratford, without giving any month or year of birth, being only five, were: Lieutenant Hammond in 1634; Sir William Dugdale in 1656; Thomas Fuller (1608–1661)²⁸⁹ in 1662 (who coincided with Dugdale). Then came Edward Philips in 1675; Gerard Langbaine in 1691; and last, Sir Blount in the year 1694. Except for Lieutenant Hammond, who was not a biographer, all stated with the utmost of their faith, and not upon fact, that Shakespere was born in Stratford, yet no month or year of birth was ever given.

Other authors began to be more hypothetical; they offered the month of April and the year 1564. These authors were seven in total, being: Nicholas Rowe in 1709; Thomas Birch in 1739 and 1752. This particular chain continued onto Philip Nichols in 1763; D. E. Baker in 1764; Chaudon et Delandine in 1804; Alexander Dyce in 1832; and last, Thomas Campbell in 1838. All these authors believed Shakespere was born in Stratford in April 1564.

To the exact day in April, came from two authors only: Isaac Reed (collector of books and commentator) in 1782, and Stephen Jones in 1812. These two writers stated the actor was born on April 16, 1564, a statement that none of the already mentioned authors had stated before,

²⁸⁸ Thomas de Quincey, *Shakspeare a Biography* (Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1864).

²⁸⁹ Dr. D'Avenant, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, his maternal uncle, was a master, and his cousin, Edward D'Avenant, a tutor. Fuller took his degree of B.A. in 1624/5, and M.A. in 1628. His relatives used all their influence, which was considerable, to secure his preferment, and he speedily became Perpetual Curate of St. Bevis, Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, and Prebendary of Salisbury.

nor had such a day of the month been given anywhere in the Parish-Register or on the tombstone. How they derived to their conclusion, we have not been able to discover.

It could not end there, because the cascade of authors that came afterwards (see footnote) ²⁹⁰ rushed to state that Shakespere was not born on April 16, as Reed and Jones were stating, but the correct date was April 23, 1564, again, disregarding the Parish-Register.

In 1773, the edition of Johnson and Steevens, entitled: *Plays of William Shakespeare*, held corrections and illustrations of various commentators that carried various registrations from the Parish-Register. By the authors' statements, their extract was made by Rev. Joseph Greene, who we met earlier. He had given the extract of registrations to his patron, who was James West (d.1772). The authors (Johnson and Steevens) did not check or research this extract for correctness nor for validity, and sooner than later, Malone, in 1778, came out saying: "He [Shakespere] died in the 53rd year of his age; on his birthday, April 23, 1616, and had exactly completed his 52nd year." The conduct of Malone is far from commendable, because he adopts the substance of the nameless note that was given by Greene, "born April 23," and made no inquiry into its credibility, expressing it in the most authoritative manner.

However such disinformation came to be, we have Rowe in 1709 having Shakespere dead by his 53rd year, and Malone in 1790 has Shakespere dead in his 52nd year (being the birth date, April 23, 1616), which rested on an eighteenth century blunder. ²⁹¹ It is just as when these biographers were totally disagreeing on when the actor took to go to London, because Halliwell-Phillipps makes the actor leave home in 1585; Richard G. White and Hamilton W. Mabie make him leave in 1586, and Fleay makes him leave in 1587.

"It is a mere fantasy," Chambers writes, "that he [Shakespere] was enlisted by Leicester's men on a visit to Stratford-on-Avon in 1586; and Professor Baldwin's conjecture that he may have then begun a seven-year period of formal apprenticeship in a Company rests upon a complete misapprehension of the nature of theatrical training." ²⁹²

Here is Malone's comment, made in 1821, on the Johnson and Steevens' extract received from Greene: "Shakespere was born at Stratford, *probably* on Sunday, April the 23rd, 1564. I say *probably*, because we have no direct evidence for this fact. The Rev. Joseph Greene, who was master of the Free School at Stratford, several years ago made some extracts from the register of that parish, which he afterwards gave to the late James West. They were imperfect, and in other respects *not quite accurate*. In the margin of his paper, Rev. Joseph Greene has written,

²⁹⁰ Joseph Greene in 1773; Edmond Malone in 1778, in 1785, in 1790, in 1793, and in 1803; George Chalmers in 1797, in 1799 and in 1805; R. B. Wheller in 1806, in 1814 and in 1824; Alexander Chalmers in 1810 and in 1816; John Britton in 1814 and in 1818; Nathan Drake in 1817; P. P. G. Guizot in 1821, in 1852 and in 1860; William Harness in 1825; Villemain in 1825, in 1838 and in 1858; James Plumtre in 1828; David Brewster in 1830; Thomas Campbell in 1838 though in a previous publication of his, he had not stated the exact day of the month of April. But later, he again referred to the exact day of the month, being April 23 when he wrote in 1848; Philarete Chasles in 1838; E. J. B. Rathery in 1844; J. R. Wise in 1861; J. C. M. Bellew in 1863; T. B. Shaw in 1864; and, C. C. Clarke in 1864.

²⁹¹ E. K. Chambers, *The Works of William Shakespeare* (1901), Vol. I.

²⁹² Ibid.,

opposite the entry relative, to our poet's baptism, 'born on the 23rd' but for this, as I conceive, his only authority was the inscription on the tombstone: *Obiit año Do 1616, ætatis 53, die 23 Ap*, which, however, renders the date here assigned for his birth sufficiently probable. He was baptized April 26, 1564, as seen in the Stratford register. He was born three days before, April 23, 1564. I have said this on the faith of Rev. Joseph Greene, who, I find, made the extract from the register which Mr. West gave Mr. Steevens; but query, how did Rev. Joseph Greene ascertain this fact?"

How indeed, and it is a pity we could find no continuance of where Greene ascertained his "fact." It is wise to remember an earlier investigation related in this work of Dugdale's countless mistakes when he took down his inscriptions when he allegedly visited Stratford for the compilation of inscribed tombstones. Furthermore, Steevens was a scoundrel forger, and we deal with his forgeries in a later section of this work.

We close this subject with just a few, but very important comments. The first, comes from Robert Frazer: "Shakespere's death attracted no attention whatever. His son-in-law, Dr. John Hall, made the following entry in his notebook of cases: 'My father-in-law died last Thursday.' That is all a brief notice, but sufficient in his eyes. And yet Shakespearians of today lay their hands upon their hearts, and say, 'there is no mystery about Shakespeare; records amply establish the identity between the actor and the writer.' Outside of the First Folio of 1623, there was never any contemporary claim made that Shakespere, the actor, was the author of the works since known as Shakespeare's." ²⁹³

George Hookham supports similar thoughts: "What happened when Shakespere died? Not a solitary sentence or couplet to grace his memory. Nothing till six years later when [Ben] Jonson wrote the famous commendatory verses prefixed to the 1623 Folio." ²⁹⁴

If remembered, we gave irrefutable evidence pertaining to the First Folio of 1623 as a very strong motive why the Stratford actor was dubbed the Immortal Bard.

Richard G. White, a strict Stratfordian, must have given a sigh of disappointment, when he wrote: "We do not know positively the date of Shakespeare's birth, or the house in which he first saw the light, or a single act of his life from the day of his baptism to the month of his obscure and suspicious marriage. [Both of these events have already been presented to the reader.] We are equally, ignorant of the date of that event, and of all else that befell him from its occurrence until we find him in London; and when he went there we are not sure, or when he finally returned to Stratford."

It is now universal belief of Shakespere's birth date to be April 23, 1564, (Old Style) since the new style was not then observed in England, and was ten days in advance of the Old; this brings a difference of twelve days between them: So that April 23 (Old Style) was in the year 1564, attributed to May 3 (New Style); a date which corresponds to May 5 (New Style). "It has

²⁹³ The Silent Shakespeare (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915).

²⁹⁴ Will O' The Wisp (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1922) 11.

accordingly been made a question,” Ingleby wrote as regards to Shakespere’s birthday, “whether we should not celebrate the occasion on either the 3rd or 5th May, in every year.”²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ Shakespeare: the Man & the Book (London: Trübner & Co., 1877), Vol. I.

CHAPTER THREE

Shakespearean References with Historical Facts

“Stratfordians prefer imagining a miraculous monster to accepting the existence of an actual being.”

—*Batchelor Crouch (1912)*

Reviews and Discussions Literary,
Political, and Historical, not relating to Bacon
By James Spedding (1879)

Richard Simpson's note on this subject has not received so much attention from Shakespearian scholars as I expected. If there is in the British Museum an entire dramatic scene, filling three pages of fifty lines each, composed by Shakespeare when he was about twenty-five years old, and written out with his own hand, it is a 'new fact' of much more value than all the new facts put together, which have caused from time to time so much hot controversy of late years.

As a curiosity, it would command a high price; but it is better than a curiosity. To know what kind of hand Shakespeare wrote would often help to discover what words he wrote. Is it possible that we have here a sample, not only of his handwriting, but of his handwriting under the heat and impulse of composition? This is Mr. Simpson's question; and though he does not pretend to offer proof of the fact, he gives reasons for thinking it likely, which certainly deserves serious consideration.

A play on the subject of the life and death of Sir Thomas More, supposed on other grounds to have been the property of the Company of players to which Shakespeare belonged, and to have been written about the year 1590, may still be read all but a scene or two in the shape in which it was originally submitted to the Master of the Revels for his license.²⁹⁶

Large alterations have been made in it; whole scenes have been added or rewritten. The rewritten scenes are found on separate sheets of paper, and in different handwritings; and being also very different in style, may be supposed to have been contributed by their several authors in the state in which they are. One of them shows so marked superiority to the rest, in every quality of dramatic composition, as to suggest the question: Who was there then living that could have written it?

Now it has always been supposed that one of Shakespeare's employments, in the beginning of his theatrical career, was the revision and adaptation to the stage of other men's compositions. In this case, the Master of the Revels had taken alarm at a scene representing a popular insurrection, and ordered it to be struck out. How it had been handled in the original copy we

²⁹⁶ Harleian MS. 7368.

cannot tell; for the leaf which contained it has been removed, and we only know that it ended with the submission of the insurgents, after a speech from Sir Thomas More, concluding with a promise to intercede for their pardon.

From the closing sentence, it may be inferred that this speech was in prose; and if the argument was weakly handled as from the rest of the composition seems very likely the young Shakespeare may have been called in to mend and strengthen it. If the substituted scene was his answer to the call, no difficulty presents itself for explanation; for, though a very good specimen of his powers as a dramatic writer, we know that it was not beyond them. But if it was not his, there must have been somebody else then living who could write as well as he; and the difficulty is to name him. These considerations are sufficient to make out a case for inquiry, and the questions to be asked are two:

1. Does the workmanship of this scene bear internal evidence that Shakespeare was the workman?
2. Does the penmanship bear internal evidence that the penman was the author?

The data for an answer to the first of these questions are within the reach of most people who think the matter worth a little trouble. The play has been printed by the Shakespeare Society; and though the condition of the manuscript as to handwriting is imperfectly explained, every reader may judge for himself whether it contains any scene or scenes implying a different and superior author to the rest, and how far they go to prove that that author was Shakespeare. What he has to do is only to read the whole play straight through with a free attention. If he finds nothing there but what might have been written by anybody, he need not trouble himself with any further inquiry.

For the second question will have no interest for him. But if he finds in it, as I do, a stronger resemblance to the acknowledged works of Shakespeare's youth than to those of any other poet with whom he is acquainted, he will naturally wish to know whether the hand that wrote the lines belonged to the mind that invented them. For this, as the case now stands, he must have recourse to the original manuscript a condition which unfortunately excludes many persons otherwise well qualified to judge. For the manuscript can only be examined at the British Museum, and the character of the handwriting can only be understood by those who are familiar with the ordinary handwriting of the period. But those who are, and who can spare time for an attentive examination, will conclude, I think, that the penman was the author: for though the corrections are very few, they will see that those which do occur are not like corrections of mistakes made in copying, but like alterations introduced in the course of composition. They will also see that it is a hand which answers to all we know about Shakespeare's. It agrees with his signature; which is a simple one, written in the ordinary character of the time, and exactly such a one as would be expected from the writer of this scene, if his name was William Shakespeare, and he wrote it in the same way. It agrees with the tradition, that his first occupation was that of a *Noverint*,²⁹⁷ a lawyer's copying clerk: for in

²⁹⁷ Attorneys were called *Noverints* because of the phrase *Noverint universi per presentes* [Know all men by these presents] with which many legal instruments then began.

that case he must have acquired in early youth a hand of that type, which, when he left copying and took to original composition, would naturally grow into such a hand as we have here. It agrees also with the report of his first editors, that they had ‘received from him scarcely a blot in his writings,’ he ‘flowed with such facility.’ And it shows more than one instance of a fault which has caused much trouble to his later editors a fault incident to that very facility the occasional omission of a word in the eagerness of composition. There are at least two places in which the metre halts, though no irregularity can have been intended; doubtless from this cause. As for its appearance and character, that is a thing which can hardly be conveyed by description; but those who are possessed of Netherclift’s *Handbook to Autographs* will find, in the autograph of Edmund Spenser, a hand a good deal like it; the letters are formed upon the same model, and there is some resemblance in the execution.

These, however, are mere opinions, not entitled to any authority. The point will never be settled unless people can see the evidence for themselves. And to bring it within reach of the generality of readers, I would suggest the publication in facsimile of the whole scene in question; together with a line or two of each of the other hands contained in the manuscript (of which I make out five), by way of specimen, that the differences may be clearly shown. For Mr. Simpson takes both the scene immediately preceding, and the subsequent scenes to be in the same hand; whereas I take them to be certainly in another; the remainder of the dialogue having evidently been added by a different and very superior penman; though whether or not by the same who penned the insurrection scene, I should not like to say positively without taking the opinion of an expert. But any question which may arise on this point may be allowed to stand over. The inquiry will be much simpler if confined to the authorship and penmanship of the insurrection scene; the handwriting of which, though of the ordinary type, is far from ordinary in character, but might be easily recognized wherever met with, and (with the help of the proposed facsimile) identified. If the question should prove interesting enough to call for a reprint of Dyce’s edition of the whole play, it should be carefully collated: for, though generally very correct, I have noticed some errors and omissions.

I Elizabethan Times

Among the theatres and taverns of the Elizabethan time, there were five great Inns (or common hostgeries) turned to playhouses more famous than the rest, which were regularly used by the best London troupes within its city and suburbs. These five were: The Bell and the Crosskeys, close to each other in Gracechurch Street; the Bull in Bishopsgate Street; the Bell Savage, which was located on Ludgate Hill; and finally, the Boar’s Head in Whitechapel Street. Soon after 1580, the authorities of London received permission from Elizabeth and her Privy Council to thrust the players out of the city, and to pull down all playhouses and dicing-houses within their liberties. This was done by having the following playhouses pulled down and suppressed by the care of those religious senators: Playhouses in Gracious Street; the Bell and the Crosskeys in Bishopsgate Street; the Bull (that near St. Paul’s, that on Ludgate Hill); the

Bell Savage; and playhouses in Whitefriars.²⁹⁸ Also, on September 5, 1557, the Privy Council instructed the Lord Mayor that some of his officers do “forthwith repair to the Boar’s Head without Aldgate, where, the Lords are informed, a lewd play called *A Sackful of News* shall be played this day, and to arrest the players, and send their playbook to the Council.”



Figure 17: The Mermaid Tavern

During the year of 1573, there were various fencing contests held at the Bull in Bishopsgate; an area that is alluded to for the year 1594, where Shakespere resided; but this tale was trumped up by an American, eventhough the Subsidy Rolls of London hold an entry that a “William Shakespeare was assessed in 1597 in that district.”²⁹⁹ Not very far away, was a tavern dwelling with fables: The Mermaid.

An ordinary licensing patent was granted to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1588, which authorized him “to make licenses for keeping of taverns and retailing of wines throughout England.”³⁰⁰ This no doubt allowed Raleigh to open the Mermaid with little difficulty. The tavern was delightful

²⁹⁸ Richard Reulidge, *A Monster Lately Found Out and Discovered* (1628).

²⁹⁹ Annals of St. Helen’s, Bishopsgate, 221, 322.

³⁰⁰ Price, *English Patents of Monopoly*, 12.

outside and inside, with low panelled rooms, immense fireplaces and dog-grates. Many monograms, names, and dates were carved on the stone fireplaces. It used to stand on the south side of Cheapside, between Bread and Friday Streets, to attend the meetings of the famous Mermaid Club; here were to be found Spenser, Beaumont (1586–1616), Fletcher, Jonson, Carew (1589–1639),³⁰¹ Donne, and others. Beaumont well described the brilliancy of these gatherings in his poem written to Ben Jonson:

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! Heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that everyone from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.

Coming down to Elizabethan literature, it can be said that since William Caxton (*d.1491*)³⁰² who is known as the first introducer of printing in England, his first book known to be printed in English in 1471, entitled: *Recuyel of the historyes of Troy* planted the seeds for Elizabethan poetry, novels, pamphlets, translations, chronicles, and plays, that were all operations of a common creative organism in which intellect and imagination were the equally vital motive forces. Elizabethan literature was not precisely confined to the Reign of Elizabeth; nor was the Jacobean literature, which followed, born at the accession of King James. Elizabethan and Jacobean were for the most part one literature, a number of the writers being active in both Reigns. Nevertheless, as the Elizabethan impulse of imaginative freedom lessened, there developed that formal intellectualism which appears as the distinguishing Jacobean characteristic in literature. So far as such a distinction can be made, William Shakespeare is the typical Elizabethan, and Ben Jonson the typical Jacobean.

As to the art of printing in the Reign of Elizabeth, it was fully employed by the controversies of the times. In the year 1585, the puritan publications had become so obnoxious to the Royal Court, that a decree of the Star Chamber confined the exercise of that art to London and the universities, and forbade the setting up of a press without a license. However, the non-conformists rendered this prohibition of no avail, by printing their works abroad, and importing them to England, where they had an extensive circulation. The High Commission Court laid a further restraint on the press, by prohibiting the printing of satires and epigrams.

The puritans, notwithstanding the orders of the government, had a private press where they printed their controversial work. This press was first stationed at Mousley in Surrey, but the

³⁰¹ Thomas Carew was educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxon, but never took a degree. After traveling as a young man on the Continent, he returned to England, and was received with special favour at the Court of Charles I. The King appointed him a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber. Carew's poetry is all of a light and airy character, and deals with minor subjects.

³⁰² Born in Kent, he served his apprenticeship to Robert Large, an eminent mercer in St. Olave's parish, in the Jewry, who was chosen Lord Mayor for the city of London in the year 1439.

vigilance of the court obliged it to shift its quarters and retire to Fawsley, Norton, Coventry, Woolston, and to Manchester.

This press cost several persons their lives who had dared to harbour it in a time when periodical publications were called “The Newspaper” and where it first took rise with the first English newspaper on July 23, 1588, calling itself the “English Mercurie.”^{303,304}

The Elizabethans even had critical gallants of the theatre, who carried a note-book to collect the best jokes, to use again at the Ordinary or at the Court suppers. If he were needy, under this pretext of note taking, he would perhaps turn brachygrapher (reporter), and take down the play in shorthand for the use of the pirate publishers, that race detested by the actors of the day, whom Webster denounces, and from whom Shakespeare materially suffered. Most gallants who affected to be literary kept commonplace books for their extracts from plays.³⁰⁵

No doubt, much had to do with the Master of the Revels, who was a Household official, with immense power, and working under the direction of the Lord Chamberlain, or in matters of higher importance under that of the Privy Council, the High Commission, or even the Sovereign. His original functions included the review of plays given at Court. Tentatively under a patent for Leicester’s Men in 1574, more directly under a commission issued to him in 1581, and effectively, as overruling a claim to censorship by the London Corporation, about 1589, he came to cover all plays given in public.³⁰⁶

The Office [Master of the Revels] resteth in skill of device, in understanding of histories, in judgment of comedies tragedies and shows, in sight of perspective and architecture, some smack of geometry and other things; wherefore the best help is to make a good choice of cunning artificers severally, according to their best quality. When a play was rough-drafted it was submitted to the Master of the Revels for his censorship. He cancelled what he did not approve and wrote his directions in the margin. In compliance with these, the author wrote insertions which were attached to the draft, and the whole was submitted to censor again.³⁰⁷

During nearly all of Elizabeth’s Reign, the Mastership of the Revels was held by Sir Edmund Tylney, who succeeded to the post in 1560 and held it until 1610. In the execution of his duty to provide the Queen with the best, the Master was armed by her, early in her Reign, with the power to command the services of actors, playwrights, tradesmen, workmen, whenever needed, and as long as needed; also, to punish with as long a term of imprisonment as he chose those who dared to disobey his summons. His power to decide whether plays should be given at Court soon led to his authority to grant or withdraw licenses for all plays

³⁰³ James G Barlase, *A Historical Sketch of the Progress of Knowledge in England* (1819).

³⁰⁴ Of the first Stratford-upon-Avon newspaper, published from 1749 to 1753, single copies only of five or six numbers are now known to exist.

³⁰⁵ Thornbury, *Shakespere’s England* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1856), Vol. II. 20.

³⁰⁶ E. K. Chambers, *The Works of William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1901), Vol. I.

³⁰⁷ C. M. Ingleby, *Shakespeare: the Man & the Book* (London: Trübner & Co., 1877), Vol. I.

given outside the Court, in London or elsewhere; and also to grant or withhold licenses to travelling actors wishing to play outside of London.

The building where the Office of the Revels was lodged bore the interesting but somewhat inappropriate name of St. John of Jerusalem. It was a part of the system of buildings connected with an old monastery which, like many others, had been broken up in the time of Henry VIII. The rooms assigned as the Revels Office were evidently far too small and unworldly in their provisions and there are many complaints about them. There is a curious irony, too, in the fate which made the London monasteries foster in their own decay the revelries of both the Court and the city. It was at St. John of Jerusalem that for many years most of the dramatic entertainments at Court were made ready, and the theatres of Blackfriars and Whitefriars served the city as well as the Court. To conclude, the most important progress of printing in England, can be divided into five periods, up to the Victorian era:

1. From 1471 (the introduction of printing by Caxton) to the accession of James I, 1603
2. From 1603 to the Revolution, 1688
3. From 1688 to the accession of George III, 1760
4. From 1760 to 1800
5. From 1800 to 1833

The early English printers did not attempt what the continental ones were doing for the ancient classics. Down to 1540 no Greek book had appeared from an English press. Oxford had only printed a part of Cicero's *Epistles*; Cambridge, no ancient writer whatever, only three or four old Roman writers had been reprinted, at that period, throughout England. But a great deal was done for public instruction by the course which our early printers took; for, as one of them says: "Divers famous clerks and learned men translated and made many noble works into our English tongue, whereby there was much more plenty and abundance of English used than there was in times past."

The English nobility were, probably, for more than the first half century of English printing, the great encouragers of the press: They required translations and abridgments of the classic versions of French and Italian romances, old chronicles, and helps to devout exercises. Caxton and his successors abundantly supplied these wants; and the impulse to most of their exertions was given by the growing demand for literary amusement on the part of the great.

"Paper," observed Fuller "is entered as a manufacture of Cambridgeshire because there are mills nigh Sturbridge fair, where paper was made in the memory of our fathers. Pity the making thereof is disused, considering the vast sums yearly expended in our land for paper out of Italy, France, and Germany, which might be lessened were it made in our nation." ³⁰⁸

The first successful attempt to manufacture an article resembling modern paper, so far as we know, was made in Egypt at a very remote time. An aquatic plant, known to us as *papyrus*, having a soft cellular flower-stem was the material. The Romans at a later day improved upon

³⁰⁸ Worthies (Ed. Nuttall), Vol. I. 224.

the *papyrus* made by the Egyptians; they sized it in a similar manner to that pursued with rag-paper, making their size of the finest flour. The paper of the romans was very white; that of the Egyptians of a yellowish or brown tinge. The Egyptian paper was manufactured in Alexandria and other cities of Egypt in such large quantities that one individual boasted of the possession of so much paper that its revenue would maintain a numerous army.

The Chinese paper was commonly supposed to be made of silk; but silk alone could not be reduced to a pulp suitable for making paper. Refuse silk is said to have been occasionally used with other ingredients, but the greater part of the Chinese paper was made from the inner bark of the bamboo and mulberry tree and hempen rags, while the Japanese prepared paper from the mulberry; so in the month of December the twigs were cut into lengths, not exceeding thirty inches, and put together in bundles.

The ancient Mexicans also had a kind of paper prepared from the maguey plant, or American aloe, the product of which resembled the *papyrus* of the Egyptians, and adhered well to ink and colour.

The Arabians, in the seventh century, appear to have either discovered, or to have learned from the Chinese or Hindus, quite likely from the latter, the art of making paper from cotton; for it is known that a manufactory of such paper was established at Samarcand about the year 706 A.D. The Arabians seem to have carried the art to Spain, and to have made paper from linen and hemp as well as from cotton.

The art of manufacturing paper from cotton is supposed to have found its way into Europe in the eleventh century. The Greeks, it is said, made use of cotton paper before the romans which came into Germany through Venice, and was called "Greek parchment." The Moors, who were the paper-makers of Spain, having been expelled by the Spaniards, the latter, acquainted with water-mills improved the manufacture so as to produce a paper from cotton nearly equal to that made of linen rags. It is not known when cotton paper was introduced into England, but it appears that its use continued until the latter part of the fourteenth century, when it was gradually supplanted by linen paper, which began to be used in 1342.

Early paper manufactures began to flourish in France, and soon excelled their neighbours in the art, enabling them to export considerable quantities, which increased so much yearly, that in 1658 two million francs in value was exported to Holland alone; it provided Spain, England, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, but chiefly Holland, and the Levant with paper for printing; and toward the 1800's twenty-five thousand reams were annually exported to Switzerland and Germany. But at this time the art of paper-making had arrived at a great degree of perfection in England and Holland, whereby the export from France was so much reduced, that paper-mills in two provinces were discontinued.

The Chronology of Paper-making

1558 to 1635 ³⁰⁹

- 1558. Churchyard's *Spark of Friendship* was first printed this year, and mentions the paper-mill of Spilman, which is often quoted as the first in England.
- 1562. A work printed in this year mentions a paper-mill at Fen Ditton, Cambridge.
- 1564. Charles IX of France having put an impost upon paper, the University brought the subject before the parliament, when Montholon and De Thou advocated the abolition of the tax, and the University gained its cause. A year later, Charles IX, at the remonstrance of the University and the decision of the parliament, abolished the duty which he had laid upon paper.
- 1588. Nicholas, in his *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, gives a poem with the following title: "A Description and Plane Discourse of Paper, and the whole Benefits that Paper brings, with Rehearsal, and setting forth in Verse a Paper-mill built near Darthforth, by a high Germaine, called Master Spilman, Jeweller to the Queen's Majesty." This is supposed to have been the second paper-mill in England, and is often mentioned as the first. It was erected by a German named Spielman (or Spilman) in reward (from Elizabeth) the Knighthood in 1591. A document in the Land Revenue Records of England, reads: "Fenclifton, Co. Cambridge; lease of a water-mill called paper-mills, late of the bishopric of Ely, to John George, dated 14th July, 34th Eliz." This is evidence of a third paper-mill in England at this time.

Master Spilman
Jeweller to the Queen's Majesty
By: Thomas Churchyard ³¹⁰

(Then) he that made for us a paper-mill,
Is worthy well of love and world's good will,
And though his name be *Spill-man*, by degree,
Yet *Help-man* now, he shall be called by me.
Six hundred men are set at work by him,
That else might starve, or seek abroad their bread;
Who now live well, and go full brave and trim,
And who may boast *they* are with paper fed.
A high Germaine he is, as may be proved,
In Lyndoam Bodenze, born and bred,
And for this mill, may here be truly loved,
And praised, too, for deep device of head.

³⁰⁹ Joel Munsell, Chronology of the Origin and Progress of Paper and Paper-Making (1876), Ed. 5.

³¹⁰ Notes & Queries. No. 59. (1850).

In regards to the printing of a play, it was considered injurious to its stage success in the Elizabethan times; and although in the sale of a piece to the theatre there may have been no express contract to that effect between the vendor and the vendee, the purchase apparently was understood to include, with the special right of performing such pieces, the literary interest in it also. “The manager of a theater seems to have believed that the printing of a play injured the chances of success upon the stage.” Durham states. “The play was sold by the author directly to the manager, whose property it became. Copies of it might be sold to some printer by some of the players in the Company, by the manager himself, or, in rare cases, by some unscrupulous copyist taking down the play in short hand at the performance. When a play had got out of date, it would be more apt to be sold than while it was still on the stage. In some cases, however, the printing might have no bad effect upon the attendance at its performances.”³¹¹

Authors, however, were not always faithful to this understanding. Thomas Heywood noted, “though some have used a double sale of their labours, first to the stage and after to the press, for my own part, I here proclaim myself ever faithful in the first and never guilty in the last.”³¹² And in Heywood’s Prologue of 1637, he speaks of his early plays having “accidentally come into the printers’ hands and therefore so corrupt and mangled (copied only by the ear) that I have been as unable to know them, as ashamed to challenge them;” he was talking specifically of his play, entitled: *Queen Elizabeth*, first published in 1605, that “some by stenography drew the plot, put it in print, scarce one word true.”³¹³

Sometimes plays were printed secretly without the knowledge of either the authors or the Company to which they belonged, or an author, from apprehension or in consequence of a corrupt version of his piece getting abroad; he would be induced to have it printed himself.

We find a warning directed to the Stationers’ Company, in the office of the Lord Chamberlain, dated June 10, 1637, against the printing of plays, to the prejudice of the Companies who had bought them:

After my hearty commendations, whereas complaint was heretofore presented to my dear brother and predecessor by his Majesty’s Servants the players, that some of the Company of Printers & Stationers had procured and printed divers of their books of Comedies, Tragedies, Interludes, Histories, and the like, which they had for the special service of his Majesty, and their own use, bought & provided at very dear high rates.

Stationers’ Company (June 10, 1637)

There was no law to prevent the printing of any book in England, only a decree in the Star Chamber, said the learned Selden; yet proclamations were occasionally issued against authors and books, and foreign works were, at times, prohibited.

³¹¹ W. H. Durham, *An Introduction to Shakespeare* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 116.

³¹² Thomas Heywood’s address to the reader prefixed to his “Rape of Lucrece” (1608).

³¹³ Alfred W. Pollard, *Shakespeare’s Fight with the Pirates* (Alexander Poring Ltd., 1917).

The freedom of the press was rather circumvented than openly attacked by Elizabeth, who dreaded the Roman Catholics, since they were disputing her right to the throne, and the religion of the State. Foreign publications, or “books from any parts beyond the seas,” were therefore prohibited. The press, however, was not free under the Reign of a Sovereign, whose high-toned feelings and times, rendered as despotic in deeds, as the pacific James was in words. Although the press had then no restrictions, an author was always at the mercy of the government. Elizabeth too had a keen scent after what she called treason, which she allowed to take in a large compass. She condemned one author (with his publisher) to have the hand cut off which wrote his book; and she hanged another. “It was Francis Bacon, or his father Sir Nicholas, who once pleasantly turned aside the keen edge of her regal vindictiveness,”³¹⁴ said Isaac D’Israeli (b.1805) who was referring to the author Hayward and his pamphlet of *Richard II*, where Sir Francis Bacon managed to prevent the racking of that author.

On July 5, 1597, Raleigh’s letter to Robert Cecil describes Cecil’s “merry” acceptance of that scandalous play in question: “I acquainted the Lord General with your letters and kind acceptance of your entertainment. He was wonderful merry at the conceit of *Richard II*. ”³¹⁵ This letter is three years prior to the Essex rebellion; Stopes puts an interesting question to be answered: “Was it possible that, through the known sympathies of the Scotch King for the Earl of Essex, the players who had performed for him *Richard II* thought themselves safer for a while under his protection?” If so, a malicious plot was brewing under Cecil’s hand against Essex, three years prior the latter’s execution. Historical entries show the animosity between Essex and Raleigh, and are well recorded, and justly one could ask if Raleigh had his hand in Cecil’s plot against Essex as early as 1597.

In 1596, the Pope published a bull empowering Elizabeth’s own subjects to depose her. The Queen knew that there was much discontent with her policy; Essex was an exceedingly popular and exceedingly gifted soldier, and his enemies insinuated to the Queen that he aimed at deposing her, and seizing the crown for himself. Richard II was a King who had been deposed, and the Essex partisans were suspected of using his fate as a kind of symbol of what Essex intended with Elizabeth.

The Queen and her advisers revealed continual nervousness on the subject; on July 11, 1600, interrogations and notes were presented by Attorney-General Coke on Dr Hayward’s book. “The doctor selected a story 200 years old and published it last year intending the application of it to this time, the plot being that of a King who is taxed for misgovernment and his council for corrupt and covetous dealings for private ends; the King is censured for conferring benefits on hated favourites, the nobles become discontented and the commons groan under continual taxation, whereupon the King is deposed and in the end murdered.”³¹⁶

Hayward confessed that he had altered history in certain respects to suit his purposes; as for instance, having heard of benevolence under Richard III he transferred it to Richard II, and on

³¹⁴ Curiosities of Literature, Vol. II.

³¹⁵ Dom. Ser. State Pap., Eliz. 264 (10).

³¹⁶ Green’s Calendar of State Papers.

July 21, 1600, Essex admitted his treason. "He permitted underhand that treasonable book of Henry IV to be printed and published; it being plainly deciphered, not only by the matter and by the epistle itself; for what end and for whose behalf it was made, but also the Earl himself being so often present at the playing thereof and with great applause giving countenance to it." On January 22, 1601, the examination of Dr Hayward showed how repeatedly he had altered his book.

As to the date of publication in those days, it could not be more confusing, as Sir Edwin tells us: "The practice of false-dating books of the Elizabethan period was not uncommon, instances of as much as thirty years having been discovered. It has been proved by Pollard, of the British Museum; by Greg, Librarian of Trinity College, Cambridge, and by Prof. Neidig, that four plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, both dated 1600, and *King Lear*, and *Henry V*, both dated 1608, were in fact printed in 1619, three years after Shakespeare's death."³¹⁷

By an order in the Star Chamber of June 23, 1586, it provided for limiting the number of printers and of their presses, and put the licensing of books in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of London. It was in fact delegated to correctors, most of whom were Episcopal Chaplains or prebendaries of St. Paul's. On the business side, the detailed administration was in the hands of the Company of Stationers, who in their turn were subject to the linked supervision of the Privy Council and the Ecclesiastical Court of High Commission.

All the London booksellers, some 250 in number with their journeymen, and the great majority of the twenty or so printers, many of whom exercised the double trade, were freemen of the Company. Elected officers, a Master, two Wardens, and a Court of Assistants, governed its affairs. The most important document is the Register, by the entry of his "copy" in which a stationer might secure the sole right of selling a book, other than such as were held by the Company itself or by the crown printer, or by individuals, who were not always freemen of the Company, under privileges granted by letters patent.

The privileges, however, did not affect plays; small affairs, commercial and general, were handled by the less important stationers, while the Company imposed severe penalties upon breaches of copyright.

A great many plays were never entered in the Register at all, for reasons which remain obscure. In some cases a desire to save the sixpenny fee on entry may have operated; in others the manuscript may have been illegitimately obtained, although it is not clear how far, if at all, the Company concerned itself with such matters.

A book that was not entered presumably carried no copyright. But transfers of books from one stationer to another were registered, and it seems that such a transfer might secure copyright, even when there had been no original entry. Sometimes stationers went out of business

³¹⁷ Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, *The Shakespeare Myth* (London: Gay & Hancock, 1912).

without disposing of their copyrights, and in such cases the books became derelict, and available for reprinting by others.

It was a custom to introduce a play with a Prologue, in which was struck the keynote of the theme, to attune the sympathies of the auditors to the scheme of the drama about to be unfolded as “all the world’s a stage; and all the men and women merely players.” The action of the drama of the play, was within the meagre compass of a half-century, between the meridian splendour of the last Tudor Reign and the waning of that of the first Stuart. It was a period crowded with events of more real import to the English race than any other in its annals; it was an era of feudal splendour, emblazoned banners, plumes purple and cloth of gold, the glint and clangour of steel, and ruthless emblems of autocratic rule. It was, too, one of cruelty and corruption; of an illiteracy hampered by a rude jargon of popular speech, the survival of a less civilized age.

The origin of the various book sizes must always remain more or less shrouded in obscurity. But it may be added that the first quarto is supposed to date from 1465. A quarto volume (or quarto) is a book which is the size of a fourth of a sheet of printing paper. The sheets are folded twice to make four leaves or eight pages, and the usual size is about 6 x 9 inches. In Elizabethan times, a quarto was sold for six pence.

The octavo format appeared in 1470 and two years later appeared the 12mo. Jensen published the first 32mo in Venice in 1473. It is claimed that Aldus was the first to use the octavo format for his *Virgil* in 1500. Coming to the form of a Folio, this was termed a book made of sheets of paper folded only once, and of large size. The First Folio (1623) is considered the basis of Shakespearean text since the Second, the Third, and the Fourth Folios are merely reprints issued with no systematic effort toward improvement. Malone states how “the Folios 1623 and 1632, when first printed, could not have been rated higher than at ten shillings each.”³¹⁸ We deal with the publication of the First Folio in a separate chapter.

It was the fashion of those times, and did so continue for the principal gentry, Lords, Courtiers, and men of all professions not merely mechanic, to meet in St. Paul’s churchyard (or Powles as it was then commonly read) by eleven in the morning, and walk in the middle aisle till twelve at noon; then, after dinner from 3 o’clock to 6, during which times some chatted about business, others gossiping the latest news.

In regard of the universal commerce, little happened that did not first or last arrive in St. Paul’s churchyard: News-mongers, as they called them, did not only take the boldness to scrutinize the public, but also the publicize the most essential actions of the State, which some Courtier or other did allow (or betray) to the public attention.³¹⁹ Durham tells us how “at one pillar you would find lawyers standing; at another, serving men seeking employment; at still another, public secretaries. Here one could learn anything from the latest fashion to the latest political scandal. Meanwhile, divine worship might be going on in the chancel, unobserved

³¹⁸ Prolegomena (London: John Cawthorn, 1804), Vol. I.

³¹⁹ Francis Osborne (1593-1565): Works (1689).

unless someone wished to make himself conspicuous by joking with the choir boys. Thus St. Paul's was a school of life invaluable to the dramatist.”³²⁰

Returning somewhat on the subject of books, before we leave this area, is how one of the most remarkable omissions from the Stratfordian actor’s Will & Testament (if he be the Bard) is that there is no mention whatsoever regarding books. Or is it a remarkable omission? Horace H. Furness (1833–1912) an American scholar had remarked Shakespeare (the author) must have been “an omnivorous reader” as his works amply testify. That he possessed a large number of books nobody would not doubt, nor could it be doubted that he regarded them as a most precious possession. “He may not have owned all the hundreds of works which, according to Anders, he must have read, but it is peculiar to suppose that he was entirely destitute of a library.” Yet, we have a Shakespeare without books, if we are to believe the actor’s will belonged to our Bard.

Halliwell-Phillipps had a theory on this: “In a nuncupative Will & Testament that was made by Mr. Hall a few hours before he died, he gave Thomas Nash, the husband of his only child, his study of books. As the Halls were Shakespere’s residuary legatees, there can hardly be a doubt that any volumes that had been possessed by the latter at Stratford were included in this bequest. It may also perhaps be assumed that there was a study at “New Place” in the time of the great dramatist. At all events there was clearly a sitting-room in the house that could have been used for the purposes of one, but, from the absence of all reference to books in the will of 1616, it may be safely inferred that he himself was not the owner of many such luxuries.”³²¹ Greenwood could not rest upon this theory. Instead, he asked, “is it possible that the Immortal Bard, the myriad minded man, the wonder of all ages, the great teacher, and the universal philosopher, he who tells us so truly that ignorance is the only darkness; is it possible that this man died without a book in his possession? Ben Jonson, as we know, had a grand library. He loved books, and he constantly gave them away to his friends. But Shakespeare, if indeed Shakespere [the actor] and Shakespeare [the author] are one, dies without a single volume in his possession.”³²²

Others have hypothesized how the actor arriving in London found his friend Richard Field, who was working as a printer’s apprentice, and began to be acquainted in that field of books, by reading all the literature material from the printers that would furnish his works.

Richard White’s statement is worth closing this section with. “It is with no disrespect, nay, it is rather with thankfulness and sorrowing sympathy, that the devotee of Shakespeare, after examining the fruit of the laborious researches of men who have wasted sunlight and candles, and worn good eyes, in poring over sentences as musty as the parchments on which they are written, and as dry as the dust which covered them, will reluctantly decide that all this mousing has been almost in vain. It has incidentally resulted in the diffusion of a knowledge of the times and circumstances in which Shakespeare lived, and in the unearthing of much

³²⁰ An Introduction to Shakespeare (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 56.

³²¹ Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare (Longmans, Green & Co., 1884), Vol. I. 251.

³²² The Shakespeare Problem Restated (John Lane Co., 1918), 191.

interesting illustration of his works from the mould of antiquity; but only those who have the taste of the literary antiquary can accept these documents, which have been so plentifully produced and so pitilessly printed; extracts from Parish-Registers [if they are original] and old account-books, inventories, including lists of the knives and spoons and pots and pans of the guzzling Aldermen of Stratford, last wills and testaments, leases, deeds, bonds, declarations, pleas, replications, rejoinders, surrejoinders, rebutters, and surrebutters; as having ought to do with the life of such a man as William Shakespeare. They have, most of them, told us nothing, and only serve to mark and mock our futile efforts. For, although we do know something of Shakespeare's life, yet, compared with what we long to know, and what it would seem that we should be able to discover, our knowledge is, as knowledge often is, only the narrow boundary which marks the limit of a wide waste of ignorance.”³²³

II

Last Will & Testament of Willemi Shackspeare

Vicesimo Quinto die ~~Januarii~~ Martii Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nuen Regis ³²⁴ Angliæ &., decimo quarto & Scotie xlixo Annoque Domini 1616
Testamentum
Willemi Shackspeare Registretur ³²⁵

In the name of God Amen:

I William Shackspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warr[wickshire] gent in perfect health and memory god by praised do make and ordain this my last Will & Testament in manner and form following that is to say first...

I commend my soul into the hands of God my Creator hoping and assuredly believing through thonelie merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour to be made partaker of life everlasting and my body to the earth whereof it is made.

Item: I Give and bequeath unto my ~~sonne and~~ daughter Judith ³²⁶ £150 of lawful English money to be paid unto her in manner and form following. That is to say £100 *in discharge of her marriage portion* within one year after my decease with consideration after the rate of two shillings in the pound for so long time as the same shall be unpaid unto her after my decease and the £50 residue thereof upon her surrendering *of or giving* of such sufficient security as the overseers of this my Will shall like of to surrender or grant all her estate and right that

³²³ Memoirs (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1865), 4.

³²⁴ Collier had incorrectly read “rex,” the original being “R.” contracted.

³²⁵ In the Principal Probate Registry, Somerset House, London. Original spelling has been maintained.

³²⁶ Judith Shakespere was married to Thomas Quiney (*b.1588*) in 1615. The date of Quiney’s death is unknown. He survived his brother Richard (*b.1587*) and received an annuity of £5 charged by his last Will & Testament, on the family lands at Shottery. He does not seem to have returned to Stratford after he left. The couple had three sons, all of whom died in infancy or early youth. Judith survived her family and her sister Susanna. There exists a recorded entry of complaint against Thomas Quiney and his wife Judith, for marrying without a license; it is entered in the Act and Deposition books being records of the proceedings of the Worcester Consistory Court, which was formerly held at the Western end of the South aisle of the Cathedral. (Joseph William Gray, *Shakespeare’s Marriage* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905)).

shall descend or come unto her after my decease *or that she now hath* of in or to one copyhold tenement with the appurtenances lying and being in Stratford aforesaid in the said county of warr[wickshire] being parcel or holden of the manor of Rowington unto my daughter Susanna Hall and her heirs forever.³²⁷

Item: I give and bequeath unto my said daughter Judith £150 more if she or any issue of her body living at the end of three years next ensuing the day of the date of this my will during which time my executors to pay her consideration from my decease according to the rate. And if she die within the said term without issue of her body then my will is and³²⁸ I do give and bequeath £150 thereof to my niece Elizabeth Hall and £50 to be set forth by my executors during the life of my sister Johanna Hart and the use and profit thereof coming shall be paid to my said sister Jone [Joan] and after her decease the said L li [sic] shall remain.

Amongst the children of my said sister equally to be divided amongst them. But if my said daughter Judith be living at the of the said three years or any issue of her body then my Will is and so I devise and bequeath the said £150 to be set out *by my executors and overseers* for the best benefit of her and her issue and *the stock not to be* paid unto her so long as she shall be married and covert baron ~~by my executors & overseers~~ but my will is that she shall have the consideration yearly paid unto her during her life and after her decease the said stock and consideration to be paid to her children if she have any and if not to her executors or assigns she living the said term after my decease provided that if such husband as she shall at then of the said three years be married unto or attain after do sufficiently assure unto her and issue of her body lands answerable to the portion given unto her and to be adjudged so by my executors and overseers then my will is that the said CL li [sic] shall be paid to such husband as shall make such assurance to his own use.

Item: I give and bequeath unto my said sister Jone XX li and all my wearing apparel to be paid and delivered within one year after my decease. And I do will and devise unto her the house with the appurtenances in Stratford wherein she dwelleth for her natural life under the yearly rent of xiid.

Item: I give and bequeath unto her three sons William Hart,³²⁹ [Thomas] Hart³³⁰ and Michael Hart £50 a piece to be paid within one year after my decease ~~to be set out for her within one~~

³²⁷ Malone had noticed some irregularity with two of these entries regarding Judith: "The words in our poet's will, 'provided that if such husband as she shall at the end of the said three years be married unto,' seemed to me to afford a presumptive proof that Shakespere, when he made his will, did not know of the marriage of his daughter Judith (the person there spoken of) which had been celebrated about a month before: A circumstance, however, which, even when I stated it, appeared to me very extraordinary, and highly improbable. On further consideration [note how he does not state on further investigation as opposed to "on further consideration"] I am convinced that I was mistaken, and that the words above-cited were intended to comprehend her then husband, and any other to whom within three years she might be married. The word 'discharge' in the bequeath to Judith, which had escaped my notice, 'one hundred pounds in discharge of her marriage portion,' shows that he must have been apprised of this marriage, and that he had previously covenanted to give her that sum."

³²⁸ Mr. Hunter asserts that the will has never been sufficiently well edited, saying, as an example, that the word "and" in this place is not to be found there; but the usual contracted form of the conjunction is evidently seen in the Parish-Register.

³²⁹ William Hart (d.1616) Shakespere's brother-in-law.

~~year after my decease by my executors with the advise & directions of my overseers for her best profit until her marriage & then the same with the increase thereof to be paid unto her.~~

Item: I give and bequeath unto her the said Elizabeth Hall all my plate (*except my broad silver and gilt bowl*) that I now have at the date of this my will.

Item: I give and bequeath unto the poor of Stratford aforesaid £10; to Mr. Thomas Combe ³³¹ my sword; to Thomas Russell Esq., ³³² £50 and to Francis Collins of the Borough of Warr[wickshire] in the county of Warr[wickshire] Gent £13. 6s. 8d. to be paid within one year after my decease.

Item: I give and bequeath to ~~Mr. Richard Tyler the elder Hamlett Sadler~~ ³³³ 26s.8d. to buy him a ring; to *William Reynolds Gent* 26s. 8d. to buy him a ring; to my godson William Walker [1608–1679] 20s. in gold; to Anthony Nashe Gent. 26s. 8d. to Mr. John Nash 26s. 8d. in gold & to my fellows *John Heminge, Richard Burbage & Henry Cundell [Condell]* 26s. 8d. a piece to buy them rings.

Item: I give will bequeath and devise unto my daughter Susanna Hall *for better enabling of her to perform this my Will and towards the performance thereof* all that capital messuage or tenement with the appurtenances *in Stratford aforesaid* called the New Place wherein I now dwell and two messuages or tenements with the appurtenances situated lying and being in Henley Street within the borough of Stratford aforesaid. And all my barns, stables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever situated lying and being or to be had received, perceived or taken within the towns and hamlets, villages, fields and grounds of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bushopton and Welcombe or in any of them in the said county of war[wickshire] and also all that messuage or tenement with the appurtenances wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, situated lying and being in the Blackfriars in London near the Wardrobe ³³⁴ and all other my lands tenements and hereditamentes whatsoever. To have and

³³⁰ Edmond Malone, Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1821), Vol. II. 603: “It is singular that neither Shakespere nor any of his family should have recollected the Christian name of his nephew, who was born at Stratford but eleven years before the making of his will. His Christian name was Thomas; and he was baptized in that town, July 24, 1605. He was at this time, therefore, between ten and eleven years old.”

³³¹ John Combe (d.1614) upon his death, left the Stratfordian actor a small bequest in money and a legal entanglement. The attempt of Combe’s son to enclose certain fields at Welcombe, which had long been common, was vigorously opposed by the corporation of the town. Both as the owner of neighbouring property and as joint owner of the tithes of old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton, Shakespere had an interest in the matter which arrayed him at the start in active opposition to the plan to enclose the property. A record in the diary of Thomas Green, the town clerk in 1603 and cousin to Shakespere, shows the latter’s influential position in the dispute, also putting him in London around the autumn of 1614, the year of Combe’s death.

³³² Thomas Russell (1570–1634) lived near Stratford. In 1616 he witnessed and benefited under Shakespere’s last Will & Testament. In 1603, Russell became the stepfather (since 1603) of the young Leonard Digges who contributed an Eulogy in the First Folio (1623).

³³³ Instead of “Hamlett Sadler, Mr. Richard Tyler Thelder,” was first written.

³³⁴ By “the Wardrobe” is meant the King’s Great Wardrobe, a royal house, near Puddle Wharf, purchased by King Edward III from Sir John Beauchamp, who built it. King Richard III was lodged in this house in the second year of his Reign. In March 1612, Shakespere bought a house in the Blackfriars from a Henry Walker, “abutting upon a street leading down to Puddle Wharf, on the east part, right against the King’s Majesty’s Wardrobe.” The house was purchased by Henry Walker in October 1604, from Mathew Bacon, of Gray’s Inn. The sum of £140 was to be paid by Shakespere, but it appears that he paid down only £80, and mortgaged the premises for the remainder. The property was left in Shakespere’s last Will & Testament to his daughter Susanna Hall. The mortgage entails a section regarding the “plot of ground on the West side of the said tenement, which was lately enclosed with boards

to hold all and singular the said premises with their appurtenances unto the said Susanna Hall for and during the term of her natural life and after her decease to the first son of her body lawfully issuing and to the heirs males of the body of the said first son lawfully issuing and for default of such issue to the second son of her body lawfully issuing and of the heirs males of the body of the said second son lawfully issuing and for default of such heirs to the third son of the body of the said Susanna lawfully issuing and of the heirs males of the body of the said third son lawfully issuing and for default of such issue the same so to be remain to the fourth son, fifth, sixth and seventh sons of her body lawfully issuing one after another and to the heirs males of the bodies of the said fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sons of her body lawfully issuing one after another and to the heirs males of the bodies of the said fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sons lawfully issuing in such manner as it is before limited to be and remain to the first, second and third sons of her body and to their heirs males. And for default of such issue the said premises to be and remain to my said niece Hall and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing for default of such issue to my daughter Judith and the heirs males of her bodies lawfully issuing. And for default of such issue to the right heirs of me the said William Shakspeare forever.

Item: I give unto my wife my second best bed with the furniture. ³³⁵

Item: I give and bequeath to my said daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bowl.

All the rest of my goods, cattle, leases, plate, jewels and household stuff whatsoever after my debts and legacies paid and my funeral expenses discharged, I give devise and bequeath to my son-in-law John Hall Gent and my daughter Susanna his wife whom I ordain and make executors of this my Last Will & Testament. And I do entreat and appoint the said Thomas Russell Esq., and Francis Collins Gent to be overseers hereof and do revoke all former Wills and publish this to be my last Will & Testament.

In *Witness whereof* I have hereunto put my *seal hand* the day and year first above written.
Witness to the publishing hereof:

Fra: Collyns; Juilyus Shawe; John Robinson; Hamnet Sadler; Robert Whattcott.

*

The above last Will & Testament was written in the clerical hand of that period, on three sheets of paper, fastened together at the top. The actor's name is signed at the bottom of the first and second sheet, and his final signature, "By me William Shakspeare" is near the middle of the third sheet. Malone was of opinion the last sheet was signed first, and that the hand grew gradually weaker in signing the second and first pages. The words printed in italics are those which in the original are interlined. ³³⁶ The man mentioned as "Fra: Collyns" was the

on two sides thereof, by Lady Anne Bacon, widow, so far and in such sort as the same was enclosed by the said Anne Bacon, and not otherwise, and being on the third side enclosed with an old brick wall."

³³⁵ Theobald had printed instead of "my second best bed" these words, "my brown best bed, with the furniture." Boswell had said: "If he [Shakespere] had taken offence at any part of his wife's conduct, I cannot believe that he would have taken this petty mode of expressing it."

³³⁶ Samuel Neil, Shakespere (London: Houlston & Wright, 1861).

solicitor at Warwick who prepared the document, which a draft only was executed, “as no time being possible for an engrossed copy.”³³⁷

From conjectures, we know the actor died on Tuesday, April 23, 1616, as referred in the Old Style, which would make that in the New Style, May 3, (or 5) 1616. He is assumed to have been buried on the following Thursday. As regards his last words in his will, it was “drawn up before January 25, 1616, and received many interlineations and erasures before it was signed in the ensuing March.”³³⁸

The will, as first written, was headed “Vicesimo quinto die Januarii anno regni domini nostri Jacobi, decimo quarto, annoque Domini 1616,” but *Januarii* was subsequently scratched out, and *Mtii* (March), was substituted.

Friswell, in his notes to the photographic reproduction of the actor’s will, wrote in 1864: “The first blunder on the very threshold of the will is curious. The abbreviation *Mtii* was originally written *Januarii*. As the year then began in March (25 of January) in the 14th year of James I, it would be in the year 1615, and not in 1616, the year of the actor’s decease.”³³⁹

Lee asserts positively that the first draft of the will was drawn up before January 25, 1615, “a double error of grave importance.” Yeatman overtakes: “As a fact there was only one draft, the contents show this and it was commenced upon the date given. The very first words written give the date, a most unusual circumstance for a draft. Drafts are never dated, though holographic wills generally are, and this circumstance probably suggested to Mr. Lee that this was not an original draft. Mrs. Stopes, who has copied much from Lee, in the course of her original work, has, in copying Lee’s assumptions as to ‘instructions,’ greatly improved upon them. She not only discovers that the poet had several drafts of his will, but that he had previously made several other wills. It is very greatly to be regretted that these great authorities will draw upon their imaginations for their facts, for though undoubtedly ingenious and plausible and very possibly accurate, there is not a scintilla of evidence to help them, and these misstatements create doubt and confusion.”³⁴⁰

George Stronach, in his works of 1904, writes: “The eccentric bequest to his wife of his second-best bed must have been explicable by some circumstance unknown to us;”³⁴¹ and Lee tells how “the name of Shakespeare’s wife was omitted from the original draft of the will, but by an interlineation in the final draft she received his second-best bed.”³⁴² White says, “a second-best bed might be passed over; but what can be done with second-best thoughts. And second-best, if good at all, seem to have been all the thoughts which Shakespere gave her; for there is

³³⁷ D. H. Lambert, *Shakespeare Documents* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904).

³³⁸ *Ibid.*,

³³⁹ *Life Portraits of Shakespeare* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Marston, 1864).

³⁴⁰ Is William Shakespeare’s Will Holographic? (*The “Saturday Review”* 1906), p. 5.

³⁴¹ Mr. Sidney Lee and the Baconians (London: Gay & Bird, 1904).

³⁴² *A Life of William Shakespeare* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1909), 282.

not a line of his writing known which can be regarded as addressed to her as maid or matron. Did ever poet thus slight the woman he loved, and during years of separation?"³⁴³

Greene who we met earlier, was in possession of the original probate copy of Shakespere's will; the one given to the executors from the prerogative office when the original was deposited. It is not known what has become of it. Greene presented a copy of it to a Mr. West of Alscot. The original letter which accompanied the document is now among the Lansdowne manuscripts at the Museum, dated from Stratford on September 1747.³⁴⁴ This is what Greene wrote of it: "I am pretty certain the thing itself will not come up to the idea you may have formed of it. The legacies and bequests therein are undoubtedly as he intended; but the manner of introducing them appears to me so dull and irregular, so absolutely void of the least particle of that spirit which animated our great poet, that it must lessen his character as a writer to imagine the least sentence of it his production. [a forgery?] The only satisfaction I receive in reading it, is to know who were his relations and what he left them, which perhaps may just make amends for trouble of perusing it."

Now here is a discovery of interest that was made. In Stratford's alleged Parish-Registers, Anne Hathaway, upon her death, was inscribed: "8. Mrs. Shakspeare. Anna *uxor* Richardi James." In burial registers, "when a woman is styled *uxor* and not *vidua*," says French, "it meant that the woman pre-deceased her husband; instances wherein a widow is called *uxor*, and *wife*, appear in the Stratford Burial Registers and tombstones, notably so in the case of Anne Shakspere. It has been surmised, that the wording in the register is evidently the burials of two different persons occurring on the same day. No clergyman could insert such a description of one person; and the inscription upon Anne Shakspere's grave would record a falsehood, if she had re-married, and noone can suppose that the Halls could be parties to such a fraud."³⁴⁵ The fact is, familiarity with the ways Trinity parish entries are made, is that, whereas there are numerous entries on these records where two baptisms of infants are bracketed to indicate the concurrence of the two ceremonies on a single day, the records of funerals presumably to be useful in the settlement of estates and titles by descent, were nowhere kept with such bracketing, although plenty of funerals may have occurred upon identical dates. It only takes some commonsense to realize this.

It does seem double identity chased Anne Hathaway even to her grave: She had a double identity for her alleged marriage to Shakespere (Whateley instead of Hathaway) and now in the burial registers she had another double, which was nailed to her coffin, inscribed as "Mrs. Shakspeare" being buried with an Anna, who was the wife of "Richardi James." So extensive research began. We discovered no separate record of a death of a "Mistress Anne, wife of Richard James" in the Stratford Parish-Records or anywhere else. Nor any record in the burial register of the funeral of either of the two ladies (if there were two of them), save the bracketed record noted earlier. "Where there are two deaths," Morgan writes, who was President of the New York Shakespeare Society between 1885 to 1925, "there must have been two interments,

³⁴³ Memoirs (Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1865).

³⁴⁴ No. 729, f. 2.

³⁴⁵ Russell G. French, Shakspeareana Genealogica (Cambridge University Press, 1869), part I.

unless both of the deceased were buried in a single grave. And why should Mrs. Richard James have been buried in the same grave as Mrs. Shakespere? In her early married life, possibly in the honeymoon, mistress Anne had expressed that she could be buried, when her time came, in the same grave with her husband (and the Trinity church authorities construed that wish as equivalent to burial in an immediately adjoining grave). Unless these two ladies were one and the same lady, the riddle is hopeless, whichever way round we struggle with it.”³⁴⁶

The inscription has given spark to light the fire on how Anne may have re-married after her husband’s death. Of some references on this matter is Robert Frazer’s: “After Shakespere’s death, his widow, whose share in his life appears to have been inconsiderable, re-married, taking one Richard James as husband, and dying August 6, 1623. In 1616, Anne Hathaway was sixty-one years old, and unless in extreme haste to divest herself of the illustrious name, must have been at least sixty-two years old at the time of her re-marriage. Before the day of the modern woman, this was a good old age, and it will be noted that this second or third marriage would be more likely to occur with a younger woman, such as Anne Whateley may have been. Against the Hathaway marriage, the vital absence of any mention of it, in the records of Stratford church, and the re-marriage of Mrs. Shakespere after 1616, are insisted on.”³⁴⁷

Anne Hathaway’s “re-marriage” was also commented on by William J. Rolfe (1827–1910) in his publication of *Shakespeare* in 1905: “Shakespere’s widow survived him for more than seven years. The record of her burial is thus given in the Parish-Register, under the date of August 1623: ‘8. Mrs. Shakespeare. Anna *uxor* Richardi James.’ This bracketed entry has led a few commentators to suspect that she was re-married to Richard James.”

Halliwell-Phillipps also comments on the matter: “This conjecture is altogether at variance with the terms of her monumental inscription, and brackets of a like description are to be seen in other parts of the register, no fewer than six occurring in the list of baptisms for the year in question, 1623. The matter, however, is placed beyond all doubt by the record of the two funerals as it thus appears in a contemporary transcript of the original notes that were made on the occasion: ‘August 8. Mrs. Ann Shakespeare. 8. Ann, wife to Richard James,’ and in an enumeration of ‘persons remarkable,’ whose names were to be noticed in the Stratford register, which was added to the volume towards the close of the seventeenth century, there is included the memorandum, ‘1623, one Mrs. Shakespere was buried.’”

Halliwell-Phillipps gives two entries from the registers; two Anne’s buried at the same time: One inscribed as “Mrs. Ann Shakespeare,” which was also included in a memorandum, “1623, one Mrs. Shakespere was buried;” he then gives another “Ann, wife to Richard James.”³⁴⁸ His theory holds water, if it can be ascertained with absolute fact. Since it cannot, it is necessary to delve into the history of one Richard James (1592–1638) the alleged second or third husband of Anne Hathaway.

³⁴⁶ Mrs. Shakespeare’s Second Marriage (New York: The Unionist–Gazette Association, 1926).

³⁴⁷ The Silent Shakespeare (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915), 25.

³⁴⁸ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

The only person found with the name Richard James, and to have had any slight connection with the Shakesperes, was the English scholar and poet, who was a close friend of Ben Jonson. Sometime around 1618, Richard James travelled to Muscovy as chaplain to Dudley Digges (1583–1639) who was the son of Thomas Digges (1546–1595) father to the famous Leonard Digges who wrote the infamous and most motivating Eulogy for the First Folio (1623).³⁴⁹

Richard James had returned to Oxford by 1620, certainly before January 28, 1623, when Thomas James (his uncle who was the first librarian at the Cotton Library) wrote to Archbishop Usher that his nephew was engaged on writing the life of Thomas Becket. By 1625, “through his uncle Dr. Thomas James, our worthy was introduced to Sir Robert Cotton,” says Alexander Grosart, in 1880, who published a total of 106 copies of Richard James’s poems in an edition, entitled: *The Poems etc., of Richard James, B.D.* At the time when Richard James became a librarian at the Cotton Library, he was accused by Sir Simonds D’Ewes of “being a needy sharking companion, and very expensive, let out or lent most precious manuscripts for money to any that would be his customers;”³⁵⁰ furthermore, he was being credited on very slight grounds with the lines: “On worthy master Shakespeare and his poems,” which were prefixed to the Second Folio edition (1632) with initials “J. M. S.”³⁵¹

As regards Richard James’s marital status, neither the *Dictionary of National Biography* nor Alexander Grosart has him down as a married man, even though Frazer was presuming Shakespere, leaving his wife only a second-best bed, “throws light on his relations with his wife. Possibly he foresaw her intention to become Mrs. Richard James.”³⁵²

Staunton tells of a different Richard James than what we discovered, thinking it to be a man who was a shoemaker, “who was inspired to become a puritan exhorter and so a local preacher. This would or might account for his meeting Mrs. Shakespeare, who kept an open house to all such at ‘New Place.’”

Morgan noted how Anne Shakespere, was a widow, and “of good gifts: £700 and possibilities.”³⁵³ This was also related by the author Evans. However, this widow did not have £700 and possibilities, or anything like that, but she had her dower in all her late consort’s Stratford realties, as well as in “New Place” itself. She had outlived her widow’s quarantine, but she still had the right of hospitality with her two daughters, and the second-best bed.

Being there is no conclusive evidence if Anne Hathaway re-married, or that Richard James was the candidate, we neither have the utmost conclusive evidence of her marriage to Shakespere. The only grounds for belief, is that poor Anne Hathaway, according to the

³⁴⁹ George Hookham, Will O’ The Wisp (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1922), 9. This author states that he “accidentally came across the information that Leonard Digges’s father dedicated a book to Sir Francis Bacon;” however, he offers no reference to substantiate this.

³⁵⁰ Stephen & Lee, Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1892), Vol. XXIX. 220.

³⁵¹ Joseph Hunter, New Illustrations of Shakespeare (London: Nichols & Son, 1845), Vol. II. 310.

³⁵² The Silent Shakespeare (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915), 67.

³⁵³ Mrs. Shakespere’s Second Marriage (New York: The Unionist–Gazette Association, 1926).

biographers and Stratfordians, was married once one day, then again the next day; and buried twice in one day.

III

Displeasure Entertains Fables

It is interesting to notice how much displeasure entertains these fables; and to offer just some flavour, in 1844, Halliwell-Phillipps had undertaken a venture into the historical records of Stratford, which had consisted of thousands of separate documents, collected into boxes and preserved together with ancient documents tangled with the modern. “A considerable number of the documents had been crumpled and slightly mutilated, but nothing like decay had set in, nor were they in any way in a dangerous state. There was, it is true, no end of dust, but that is an object in a record-room as welcome to the eyes of a paleographer as that of drain-pipes in a clay field is to a farmer. Records are very rarely injured by dust, whilst its presence is an indication of the absence of moisture, their greatest and most dangerous enemy. If they are placed in a damp room, their ultimate destruction is a question of a single generation, and when once fungi have been permitted to take root unchecked for even a very few years, all the efforts of the most skilful binders in the world will be unable to repair the damage. Here, there was nothing of the kind.”³⁵⁴

The multiple unbound documents Halliwell-Phillipps rearranged, consisted of the town charters, expired and surrendered leases, a few miscellaneous documents, and the unbound records of the town’s Guild. Once the records were arranged, he was accused in an article of the *Stratford Herald* (1844) of undertaking the work just for the interest of compiling his own notes to publish his two later works: “Without access to them, [the records] would he [Halliwell-Phillipps] have been able to compile those copious *Outlines* and voluminous notes which are read with so much interest not only by Shakespearean scholars, but by every student of the immortal poet?” Halliwell-Phillipps was also accused of another irregularity: He offered the photographer he had hired to photograph the records, the sole copyright. This led to Halliwell-Phillipps’s retirement from the Council. “My dispute is not with the people of Stratford,” he had said at the time. “every surviving old or intimate friend that I ever had there is still my old or intimate friend, and I have every reason to believe that I am only out of favour with the members of an imperious little oligarchy, who resent the slightest question of their supremacy, and who consider it highly indecorous that so inferior a being as a Shakespearean biographer should venture to dispute the validity of their decrees.”

More discontentment was coming from the year 1844, when a well-known publication of the time (“The Athenæum”), wrote: “We have now the six existing signatures of Shakespere, copied with all the skill the human hand seems capable of arriving at (the glorious art of photography was not then available).” Lee wrote regarding these signatures, how “the ink of the first signature which Shakspeare appended to his will has now faded almost beyond

³⁵⁴ The Stratford Records (Pall Mall: Harrison & Sons, 1887).

recognition, but that it was “Shakespere” may be inferred from the facsimile made by Steevens in 1776.”

It is a peculiar instance, to recollect how Lee put so much credit on Steevens’s facsimile, and is of consideration, since the latter was a forger in his own times; it opens speculation as to whether any of these signatures were original, since all signatures were coming from a forger’s hand. “Not a scrap of his [Shakespere’s] writing is known to exist, except his three signatures to the three sheets containing his [last] Will & Testament, and another upon the counterpart of the conveyance of a house in Blackfriars, London, which was bought in 1612, but it is not known that he ever lived there.”³⁵⁵

When the young forger Ireland, in 1795, produced his *Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments*, it was necessary that he should fabricate Shakespere’s name, and the engraving published by Steevens enabled him to do so. Ireland varied the spelling, as he found it said to be varied in the signatures to the will, but he more commonly spelt the name with the *a* in the final syllable. His confidence in the Shakespere editors supplied one of the means for his detection: Malone, in his *Inquiry* (1796) has a confession upon this subject, which is almost as curious as any one of Ireland’s own confessions:

In the year 1776, Steevens in my presence, traced with the utmost accuracy the three signatures affixed by the poet to his will. While two of these manifestly appeared to us *Shakspere*, we conceived that in the third there was a variation; and that in the second syllable an *a* was found. Accordingly we have constantly so exhibited the poet’s name ever since that time. It ought certainly to have struck us as a very extraordinary circumstance, that a man should write his name twice one way, and once another, on the same paper. However, it did not; and I had no suspicion of our mistake till, about three years ago, I received a very sensible letter from an anonymous correspondent, who showed me very clearly that, though there was a superfluous stroke when the poet came to write the letter *r* in his last signature, probably from the tremor of his hand, there was no *a* discoverable in that syllable; and that this name, like both the other, was written *Shakspere*. Revolving this matter in my mind, it occurred to me, that in the new facsimile of his name which I gave in 1790, my engraver had made a mistake in placing an *a* over the name which was there exhibited, and that what was supposed to be that letter was only a mark of abbreviation, with a turn or curl at the first part of it, which gave it the appearance of a letter. If Steevens and I had maliciously intended to lay a trap for this fabricator, we could not have done the business more adroitly.

Doubt also falls to John Shakespere’s handwriting, as we had seen in earlier sections of this work, remembering Lee’s statement: “When attesting documents he [John Shakespere] occasionally made his mark, but there is evidence in the Stratford archives that he could write with facility.” This can be flatly contradicted, as there is no such evidence of what Lee stated. Halliwell-Phillipps, who went minutely through the records at the time, and who, after Malone, according to Lee, “has made the most important additions to our knowledge of

³⁵⁵ Henry W. Sage, *The History of Shakespeare’s Brooch* (Stratford-on-Avon: Edward Fox, 1883).

Shakespere's biography," says: "There is no reasonable pretence for assuming that, in the time of John Shakspeare, whatever may have been the case at earlier periods, it was the practice for marks to be used by those who were incapable of signing their names. No instance of the kind has been discovered amongst the numerous records of his era that are preserved, while even a few rare examples in other districts, if such are to be found, would be insufficient to countenance a theory that he was able to write. All the known evidences point in the opposite direction, and it should be observed that, in common with many other of his illiterate contemporaries, he did not always adhere to the same kind of symbol."

In Lee's article on Shakespere in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, he writes: "But however well she [Shakespere's mother] was provided for, she was only able, like her husband, to make her mark in lieu of signing her name." And within the same article we read: "When attesting documents he [John] made his mark, and there is no evidence that he could write." The discrepancies are, as the Greeks say, bright as light, because in Lee's biography of Shakespere, he says regarding John Shakespere, that "there is evidence that he could write with facility," yet in his article of the *Dictionary of National Biography* he says "there is no evidence that he could write."

With this concept in mind, that no written word of Shakespere's has ever surfaced, (we do not include the alleged signatures of Shakespere, mentioned above), we shall give Prof. Hiram Corson's thoughts who was a scholar: "The personal history of a mere author, with no influence at Court, was not considered of sufficient importance to be recorded in those days, when the Court was everything, and the individual man without adventitious recommendations was nothing."³⁵⁶

The exact etymological origin of the author's name (William Shakespeare) is yet unsettled: One scholar suggests that it derives from the Anglo-Saxon, *Saexberht*. This would imply that the Anglo-Saxon prefix *saex* has by time been transmuted into *Shake*, and that the suffix, *berht* has become *pear* or *pere*.³⁵⁷

Stopes tells us how the surname, "in Italian heraldry, illustrates a name with an exactly similar meaning and use in the Italian language, as that of Crollalanza."³⁵⁸ She also gives reference to the Countess of Southampton in how the Countess referred to Shakespeare in 1594; however, it should be remembered, that Ireland had forged an entire collection on the Southamptons, and whatever comes from that collection should be looked upon with some scrutiny. "The Countess of Southampton made out the accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber after the death of her second husband, Sir Thomas Heneage, in 1594, and wrote: 'To William Kempe, William Shakespeare, and Richard Burbage.'"³⁵⁹

Thomas Fuller, author of the notable *History of the Worthies of England* (1662) writes regarding the surname, that it was "martial in the warlike sound of his surname, (whence

³⁵⁶ "The 'Cornell Review' (1875)

³⁵⁷ Arthur Acheson, *Shakespeare's Lost Years in London* (London: Brentano, 1920).

³⁵⁸ Goffredo di Crollalanza, *Works* (Segretario-Archivista dell' Accademia Araldica Italiana).

³⁵⁹ The Earliest Official Record of Shakespeare's Name. *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* (Berlin: 1896).

some may conjecture him of a military extraction). *Hasti-vibrans* or Shake-speare.” There was a military character with the same surname, from an early period discovered by Verstegan, who classified it with “Breakspear, Shakespeare, and the like, have been surnames imposed upon the first bearers of them for valour and feats of Arms.”³⁶⁰ Louise Bogan (1897–1970) in commenting Francis Rous’s (1579–1659) *Archaeologiae Atticae* (1658) notes the surname “Shakespeare, is equivalent to a soldier.”³⁶¹

Bancroft’s *Epigrammes*, published in 1639, notes the surname written with a hyphen, meant “this was how his literary friends knew him.”

Camden derives the surname from the mere use of weapons used in ancient times. “Some are named from that they carried, as Palmer, Long-sword, Broadspear, and in some respects Shakespear.”³⁶²

Dr. H. Bradley derives the surname from the Anglo-Saxon personal name “Seaxberht,” which E. K. Chambers thought was probably a correct derivation. And an author from an eighteenth century magazine stated that in the “*Polydoron*, names were first without question, given for distinction, faculty, desert, quality; as Armstrong, Shakespeare, of high quality.”³⁶³

Aliases did exist, for we have it from Anthony à Wood, under his entry *Doctors of Divinity* (1501), that there was a “Hugh Saunders alias Shackspear of Merton College. He was afterwards principal of St. Alban’s Hall, and is styled in one of our public Registers as *vir literis et virtute percelebris*.”³⁶⁴

Lee, in 1904 of his Shakespere biography, noted in his opinion, how the surname was first recorded: “The holder is ‘William Shakespeare’ or ‘Sakspere,’ who was convicted of robbery and hanged in 1248;³⁶⁵ he belonged to Clapton, a hamlet in the hundred of Kifergate, Gloucestershire (about seven miles south of Stratford). The second recorded holder of the surname is John Shakespeare, who in 1279 was living at Freyndon, perhaps Frittenden, Kent.”

Ben Jonson’s verse from the First Folio, states the surname came under a form which the author “seems to shake a lance as brandished in the eyes of ignorance.” A fair inference would be how the surname, as printed on poems and plays, may have been a pseudonym (a mask) like that of Mark Twain, or of George Eliot.

Regardless of the theories given, the authorship of Shakespearean literature has always been attributed to an actor, who later became a Company manager and proprietor of a London theater. The seventeenth and eighteenth century biographers were disappointed regarding the surname of the Bard, and for one simple reason: Nowhere in Stratford (where Leonard

³⁶⁰ Restitution of Decayed Intelligence (1605), p. 254.

³⁶¹ Francis Rous, *Archaeologiae Atticae* (Oxford: A. Lichfield, 1658).

³⁶² Remains Concerning Britain (London: Charles Harper, 1674), p 111.

³⁶³ Notes & Queries, 3rd Series, Vol. I, p. 266.

³⁶⁴ Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis* (London: 1815), Vol. II.

³⁶⁵ Assize rolls for Gloucestershire, 32 Henry III, roll 274.

Digges's Eulogy in the First Folio states the poet had a "Moniment") could be found a person called "Shakespeare" or "Shake-speare." On how these biographers settled the matter, can be seen from the following commentaries of the time.

Mr. White in his *A New Variorum* (1898): "The name sometimes appears as 'Chaksper' or 'Shakespere.' It is possible that 'Shakespeare' is a corruption of some name of a more peaceful meaning, and therefore perhaps of humbler derivation." ³⁶⁶

Dr. Appleton Morgan, who was the cofounder of the New York Shakespeare Society, gave an entirely different option on how to settle the matter, though it is doubtful the name, "Jacques Pierre," was ever in favour to be adopted: "The name is supposed to have been simply 'Jacques Pierre' (John Peter). This *Shak* is the present mispronunciation of *Jacques* prevalent in Warwickshire." ³⁶⁷

Edwin Reed has declared: "Literature had an absolute monopoly of it," regarding the surname spelled as Shakespeare, and gives his version of how he assumed the surname was a pseudonym: "In Grecian mythology, Pallas Athena was the goddess of wisdom, philosophy, poetry and the fine arts. Her original name was simply Pallas, a word derived from *pellein*,³⁶⁸ signifying to brandish or shake. She was generally represented with a spear. Athens, the home of the drama, was under the protection of this Spear-shaker. In our age such a signature would be understood at once as a pseudonym." ³⁶⁹

Halliwell-Phillipps, in 1880, printed a letter in his works written by Abraham Sturley, who resided in Stratford. The same letter is given by Lambert, which refers to someone called "Shak" as taking part in negotiations for a money loan. Sturley addressed the letter to Richard Quiney, a townsman living in London at the time of November 4, 1598: "Through our countryman Mr. Wm. Shak would procure us money." ³⁷⁰

Halliwell-Phillipps was in need to offer a reason on the spelling of the surname in the letter: "It is simply casual ingenuity which suggests the deflection of caprice into ignorance under the accusation that Shakespeare, and those numerous contemporaries who varied their signatures, did not know how to spell their own names. Well, they didn't, for the simple reason that names in those days had not been subjected to any rules, that the attainment of what we should call orthographical accuracy was at that time impossible, and it is obviously improper to sneer at them for indulging in a fanciful practice then as common with the learned as with the illiterate." ³⁷¹

³⁶⁶ (Philadelphia: Lippincott Co.).

³⁶⁷ The Shakespearean Myth: William Shakespeare and Circumstantial Evidence (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1881).

³⁶⁸ The word *pellein*, in Modern Greek, signifies: pulse; to pulsate.

³⁶⁹ Edwin Reed, Brief for Plaintiff: Bacon vs. Shakespeare (1891).

³⁷⁰ Abraham Sturley, Shakespeare Documents (1904).

³⁷¹ Which Shall It Be? New Lamps or Old? Shaxpere or Shakespeare? (Brighton: Messrs. Fleet & Bishop, 1880).

This can only be true as regards to the Stratford actor, whose name could have been spelt in various forms; citizens did this, it is true. But it is not true for how the author of the plays, sonnets, and poems wrote his name, which were two forms, and two forms only: Shakespeare or Shake-speare.

Chapter Four

The First Folio (1623)

“It is necessary sometimes to correct the knowledge we receive.”
—Benjamin D’Israeli (1840) ³⁷²

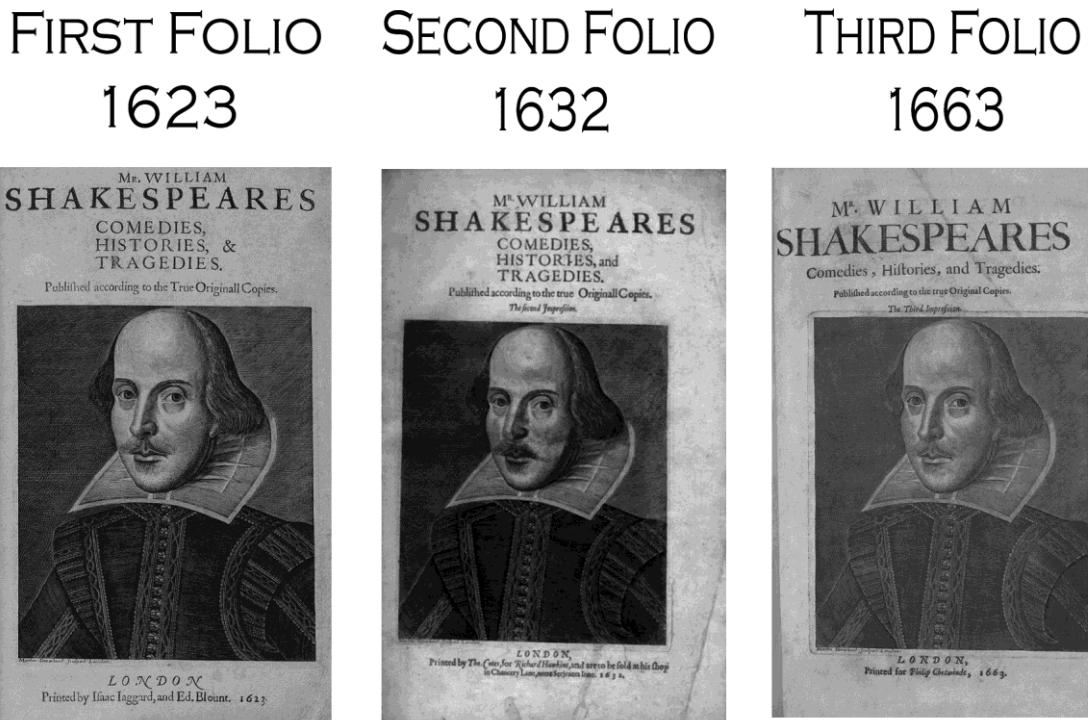


Figure 18: Shakespeare’s Folios

As the plays of the Bard were printed long before large publishing establishments had brought the art of proof-reading to its present state of quality, and were particularly unfortunate in not coming under the eye of a corrector of any intelligence, the first editions and the earlier quartos of those plays are full of errors. This is agreed upon by many Shakespearean scholars; one, being Alfred Pollard:

“Every printer knows the convenience and comfort of printing from type instead of from manuscript, and while the printer would be better pleased to print from the latest quarto instead of from manuscript, the publishers of the Folio had two good reasons for paying sixpence for a printed text and sending it to the playhouse to be corrected, rather than copying the whole play afresh; firstly, they would have had to pay their copyist more, and secondly, he would probably have made more mistakes.” ³⁷³

³⁷² Miscellanies of Literature.

³⁷³ The Foundations of Shakespeare’s Text (Oxford University Press, 1923).

The demand for playbooks in the sixteenth century was frequent. Prynne, author of *Histrion-mastix* (1633), states that some thousand editions of plays were issued in the duration of two years before they were even written. This is evident from some plays where the names of the actors are written before the entrances of the character,³⁷⁴ to which Pollard also gives evidence: “We gather from a Preface and Prologue by Thomas Heywood that from about 1605 there was a sufficient demand for plays in manuscript to encourage shorthand writers to take them down at the theatre. We gather also that, when the theatres were closed during the Civil War, Beaumont and Fletcher’s plays (mainly prompt copies) were temporarily in private hands and had to be bought back.”³⁷⁵ Pollard also tells of such plays used in the theatre that were termed as promptbooks, meaning stage copies. “Promptbooks,” Charles Shattuck tells us, “are tricky, secretive, stubborn informants. They chatter and exclaim about what we hardly need to know: That certain characters are being readied by the callboy to make their entrances; that the scene is about to change or the curtain to drop; that the orchestra is about to play at the act-end.”³⁷⁶

Lee knew of 172 copies of the First Folio to be circulating by 1906, one owned by a public institution, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, which “was described by Dickson, Secretary of the Society, at a meeting of the Society held at Edinburgh on February 12, 1906.” Other copies were in private hands, to which Lee’s brief pedigree of each copy follows.

Lady Wantage’s copy

The history of the ownership of this copy can be traced back to the eighteenth century. At the back of the last leaf is scribbled, in handwriting of that era: “Miss Stodart 1761.” There is another almost contemporary sign of association with a Mr. Scot, and on the third leaf (which contains the dedication) is the autograph signature of Andrew Wilson, a Scot who practiced medicine successfully in London for many years before his death on June 4, 1792. The next private owner, whose name is ascertainable, is Sir Coutts Trotter, the grandfather of Lord Wantage. Sir Coutts, a senior partner in Coutts’ Bank, was created baronet at George IV’s Coronation, September 4, 1821.

The Duke of Norfolk’s copy

Bibliographers have referred to a copy in the possession of the Duke of Norfolk, but when Lee made inquiries respecting it in 1901, he was informed that the only early edition of Shakespeare’s collected works, then known was a Third Folio edition.

Bishop Gott’s copy

Bishop of Truro, Dr. John Gott of Trenython, possessed a copy which he inherited from his father, William Gott, of Wyther Grange, Yorkshire. He describes it as quite perfect, but Lee never had the opportunity of inspecting it personally.

³⁷⁴ Within the original First Folio, the name of Kempe, the famous comedian who took part, appears a number of times in the place of Dogberry in the margins, showing that the play, *Much Ado About Nothing*, was set up from the very copy used by the prompter.

³⁷⁵ The Foundations of Shakespeare’s Text (Oxford University Press, 1923).

³⁷⁶ The Shakespeare Promptbooks (University of Illinois Press, 1965).

Mr. George C. Thomas' copy

This copy fetched the highest price since 1902 in a London sale room; it was sold at Sotheby's on June 20, 1904, for the price of £950. It was then purchased by Messrs. Pickering & Chatto, and passed on to Mr. George C. Thomas, of Philadelphia, through Messrs. Stevens & Brown who were Sotheby's American agents.

The Turbutt copy (restored to the Bodleian Library)

This was known as the Turbutt copy from the surname of its owners; it was the actual First Folio edition which was forwarded in sheets by the Stationers' Company to the Bodleian Library on the publication of the volume in 1623. The sheets were sent to William Wildgoose, an Oxford binder, to be bound on February 17, 1623. On its return to the library it received the press mark "S2 17 Art" and was, according to custom, chained to the bookshelf.

Mr. W. R. Bixby's copy

This copy belonged to Mr. W. R. Bixby of St. Louis, Missouri. It was in successive possession of two established families in the County of Durham from the middle of the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century.

The Dawson-Brodie Folger copy

This copy was for some years in the stock of F. S. Ellis, of Bond Street. It was made up from one or two fragmentary copies which he had acquired at various times. It was purchased at Ellis's sale in 1885 for £97 by a Scottish collector, Sir Thomas Dawson-Brodie, of Idvies.

Mrs. A. B. Stewart's copy

This copy belonged to the widow of Alexander Bannatyne Stewart of Rawcliffe, Langside in Glasgow. At the end of the volume is an autograph signature of "Tho: Bourne," who was possibly an early owner. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was in the hands of a London bookseller (Joseph Lilly) a mighty trader in First Folios. Other London booksellers through whose hands it passed were: Basil Montague Pickering of Piccadilly, and F. S. Ellis of Bond Street. Before 1878, Ellis sold it, with copies of three other Folios, for three hundred guineas to Alexander Bannatyne Stewart, of Glasgow, whose widow later owned it.

The Scott Folger copy

The large library of John Scott of Halkhill, Largs, Ayrshire, who was by profession a shipbuilder, contained a restored copy of the First Folio, of which all the preliminary leaves and last leaf were in facsimile.

The Knight Clowes copy

The external literary history gives this copy, despite its inferior condition, great interest. It belonged to Charles Knight, who we met earlier. The edition was the most popular of all in the nineteenth century. Knight studied the First Folio with exceptional zeal, and his copy, which later belonged to his grandson (W. C. Knight-Clowes) had a fascination for students.

The Thorpe Folger copy

This copy belonged to Mr. W. G. Thorpe (d.1903) of the Middle Temple, a somewhat eccentric student of Shakespearean literature.

The Edmund Waller copy

A large but defective copy which fetched £420 at Sotheby's sale on July 29, 1904.

Mr. H. R. Davis' copy

The copy (in bad condition) belonged to H. R. Davis, of Thistleton House (London).

Lee ends his list with the following summation: "In 1902 there were 116 First Folios in the United Kingdom, including the thirteen newly discovered copies which were then in Great Britain, although I did not know of their existence; fifty-one were in the United States of America; three were in the British colonies, and two were on the Continent of Europe." ³⁷⁷

Charles Knight surmises that from 1623 to 1664 only two editions of Shakespeare were sold; and when the Restoration came, an Act of Parliament was passed that only twenty printers should practice their art in the Kingdom. "The fact, as recorded by Evelyn, that at the fire of London (1666) the booksellers who carried on their business in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's lost as many books, in quires, as were worth £200,000, is rather a proof of a slow demand than of the enormous extent of bookselling. In the vaults of Saint Faith's were rotting many a copy of what the world has agreed to call 'heavy' books; books in advance of their time; books that no price would have made largely saleable the books for the few." ³⁷⁸

Malone gives an account of a First Folio sale in Allen's library, on April 15, 1799, at Leigh and Sotheby's, Covent Garden, with sale No. 1460 at the price of £40. 19s. ³⁷⁹ In more recent sales of the First Folio, Sotheby's of London, in 2001, had sold their copy to Christie's (New York) for the amount of \$6,166,00 (\$5,6 million hammer). And on July 13, 2007, a copy was sold to Finch Rare Books for the amount of £2,808,000 (\$5,153,242) being the highest price paid for a First Folio of Shakespeare at auction in the UK.

Steevens writes of First Folio copies (with irregularities) circulating in 1793: "Every possible adulteration has of late years been practiced in fitting up copies of this book for sale. When leaves have been wanting, they have been reprinted with battered types, and foisted into vacancies, without notice of such defects and the remedies applied to them. When the title has been lost, a spurious one has been fabricated, with a blank space left for the head of Shakespeare, afterwards added from the second, third, or fourth impression. To conceal these frauds, thick vermillion lines have been usually drawn over the edges of the engravings, which would otherwise have betrayed themselves when let into a supplemental page, however craftily it was lined at the back, and discoloured with tobacco-water till it had assumed the true *jaune antique*. Sometimes leaves have been inserted from the Second Folio, and, in a

³⁷⁷ Notes & Additions to the Census of Copies of the Shakespeare First Folio (London: Oxford University Press, 1906).

³⁷⁸ The Old Printer and the Modern Press (London: John Murray, 1854).

³⁷⁹ Boswell's Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1821), Vol. I.

known instance, the entire play of *Cymbeline*; the genuine date at the end of it (1632) having been altered into 1623.”³⁸⁰

I The Editing

For the editing of the First Folio, Charles Boyce, in his 1990 *Literary Reference*, presumed it was done by Edward Knight (1613–1637) who was the King’s Men (later Lord Chamberlain’s Men) bookkeeper (or book holder) at the time, since he was responsible for maintaining the prompts of each play. Edward Knight’s job was to manage the Company’s performances, ensuring that they went according to plan; he also supervised and maintained the troupe’s dramatic manuscripts.

We could not discover any personal history on Knight, only some minor professional activities: Prior to his service with the King’s Men, he functioned as prompter for a competing company, Prince Charles’s Men; he witnessed a contract between Philip Henslowe and the actors in March 1616. After some years with the King’s Men, Knight was regarded as a key member of the Company’s supporting staff, and on December 27, 1624, Sir Henry Herbert (Master of the Revels), issued an inventory of twenty-one “musicians and other necessary attendants” who could not be arrested or “pressed for soldiers” without the permission of either Herbert or the Lord Chamberlain who was William Herbert (Earl of Pembroke). Knight’s name is first on this list.

No pagination, throughout the First Folio, is in single sequence. All three sections, Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies are numbered separately. The Comedies are numbered from 1 to 303; the Histories from 1 to 232, with numbers 69 to 100 being repeated; the Tragedies are numbered from 1 to 399, though the last page is numbered 993. On page 156 the number 257 is followed and in subsequent Folios these errors were not corrected.

A short history of the Stationers’ Company is worth giving. It was founded in 1403, nearly three-quarters of a century before the introduction of printing. Its first Charter was not received until May 4, 1557, during the Reign of Queen Mary, who was proclaimed the Queen of England on July 19, 1553, and Lady Jane Grey was removed from the throne.³⁸¹ The number of “seditious and heretical books, both in prose and verse” were issued for the circulation of “very great and detestable heresies against the faith and sound Catholic doctrine of the Holy Mother the Church.” These issues became so numerous, that the government was only too glad to recognize the Company, and entrust it with the most absolute power. The Charter was

³⁸⁰ Edmond Malone, Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1821), Vol. II, Appendix. Scholars have united in agreement on one aspect: After the printing of the First Folio, many Shakespearean quartos were issued down to the eighteenth century and were known as players’ quartos.

³⁸¹ Lady Grey was the granddaughter of Mary Tudor, younger sister of Henry VIII. She was married to Guilford Dudley, son of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who was Edward’s adviser. It was on Dudley’s advice that Edward had Lady Grey his successor; she lasted on the throne for nine days. In Mary’s attempts to restore Catholicism, she had many Protestant leaders and priests killed; this earned her the name of “Bloody Mary.”

to “provide a proper remedy;” in other words, to check the fast-increasing number of publications so bitter in their opposition to the Court religion. But, stringent and emphatic as was this proclamation, its effect was almost zero.

On June 6, 1558, another rigorous Act was published from the manor of St. James which can be found in Strype’s *Ecclesiastical Memorials*.³⁸² The Act had specific reference to the illegality of seditious books imported, and others “covertly printed within this Realm, whereby not only God is dishonoured, but also encouragement is given to disobey lawful Princes and Governors.” This proclamation declared not only those who possessed such books, but also those who, on finding them, did not at once report them, should be dealt with as rebels. There was no appeal against the decision of the Stationers’ Hall representatives, who had the power entirely in their hands. A few months after Queen Mary’s futile attempt at checking the freedom of the press, a totally objective change occurred, and with Elizabeth’s accession to the throne (November 1558: Coronation January 15, 1559), the licensed stationers conveniently veered around and were as industrious in suppressing Catholic books as they had been a few weeks previously in endeavouring to stamp out those of the new religion.

II

The Printers & Editors

We now turn to the printers and editors of the First Folio, mentioning the printers first. William Jaggard (1568–1623) and Edward Blount (or Blunt) (1565–1632) were stationers and translators. During the last years of the sixteenth century, and the first three decades of the seventeenth, there were two Jaggards among the London printers; by far the better known was Isaac, who with Edward Blount issued the First Folio.

Edward Blount seems to have had no printer’s mark, but William Jaggard used the rather striking device showing a serpent biting his tail, coiled twice round the wrist of a hand protruding from the clouds and holding a wand from which springs two laurel branches surmounted by a portcullis which was the Westminster Arms; in the last coil of the serpent the word *Prudentia* [Prudence] is written.

Edward Blount, on June 25, 1588, was admitted a freeman of the Stationers’ Company and published his first work by Joshua Sylvester, entitled: *The Profit of Imprisonment* in 1594; many of his other publications included John Florio’s works.

In 1598, in memory of Kit Marlowe, Blount brought out *Hero & Leander*, and in a well-written dedication to Sir Thomas Walsingham, he speaks of himself as one of Marlowe’s intimate friends. Nothing is known of Edward Blount in later years, though his shop in earlier days had been in St. Paul’s churchyard at the sign of “The Black Bear.”

³⁸² Edition of 1822, Vol. III, part 2, 130, 131.

According to a document in the London Archives, Blount married Elizabeth, a widow of a London stationer named Richard Bankworth, before December 2, 1623, a month after the First Folio publication.³⁸³ Blount's publishing entries begin from 1594 and end to the year of his death in 1632.³⁸⁴

The movement from printer to printer in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras can be tracked down to a few: Henry Bynneman, George Bishop, Richard Field, Adam Islip and George Eld. At the end of the Jacobean period, William Jaggard and John Haviland were baptized as chief producers of printing in Britain. The First Folio of 1623 is printed by Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount. The licenser was not the Master of the Revels, but an Episcopal delegate, Thomas Worrall, a prebendary of St. Paul's.

The Second Folio of 1632, a reprint of the first, was printed by Thomas Cotes for Robert Allot where the printer used at least eight blocks (including an initial letter) that was employed nine years previously by Isaac Jaggard in the First Folio.

The Third Folio of 1663, a reprint of the second, is printed for P. C. Thomas Cotes, where the printer used at least three blocks that were employed by Thomas Cotes thirty-two years earlier in the Second Folio, and finally, the Fourth Folio, a reprint of the third, was printed in 1685, for a syndicate of booksellers.

Regarding Heminge and Condell, editors of the First Folio and alleged authors of the Dedication and Prefatory Address, Edwin Reed notes: "The alleged editors were two playwrights, formerly connected with the Company of which Shakespere was a member. Heminge appears also to have been a grocer. In the dedication, they characterize the plays, with singular infelicity as 'trifles.' They astonish us still more by the use they make of Pliny's epistle to Vespasian, prefixed to his *Natural History*, and not translated into English till 1635. Not only are the thoughts of the Latin author most happily introduced, but they are amplified and fitted to the purpose with consummate literary skill."

Craik (author) says in his *English of Shakespeare*: "Here we have, along with an emphatic and undiscriminating condemnation of all the preceding impressions, a distinct declaration by the publishers that they had the use of the author's manuscripts." Ingleby, upon the assertion that the editors printed from the author's manuscript, writes: "If by this they intended to convey to the reader the notion that the text of the Folio of 1623 was printed from the author's own manuscript, they must stand convicted of a *suggestio falsi*; for five at least of the plays included in that volume are little more than the reprint of the previous quarto editions, characterized by them as surreptitious copies."

Edward Dowden, in his *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*, printed in 1875 notes how Heminge and Condell had the entire text of the Folio intertwined with errors, and in many instances they evidently print from quartos.

³⁸³ Overall, Remembrancia, 318.

³⁸⁴ Edward Arber, List of London Publishers (Birmingham: Cambridge & Oxford Press, 1890).

Sir Madden had said, that “the editors are guilty of *suggestio falsi* in conveying to the public the idea that the Folio was printed from original manuscripts received by them at the hands of the author. If the editors were guilty of the fraudulent puffing of their own wares, coupled with denunciation of editions which they knew to be superior of their own, the plainer language used by Spalding would be fully justified.”³⁸⁵

Here is what Spalding wrote, to whom Sir Madden above refers to: “There is no doubt, that they could at least have enumerated Shakespeare’s works correctly; but their knowledge and design of profit did not suit each other. They must be presumed to have known perfectly what works were, and what were not Shakespeare’s. But these men were unscrupulous and unfair in their selection. Their whole conduct inspires distrust, and justifies a critic in throwing the First Folio entirely out of view as a dishonest and, it might be added, hypocritical attempt to put down editions of about fifteen separate plays of Shakespeare, previously printed in quarto, which though in most respects more accurate than their successors, had evidently been taken from stolen copies.”³⁸⁶

A professor of English Literature in the University of Pennsylvania, Felix Schelling, is recognized as a high Shakespearean authority. He is, moreover, a man to whom any doubt as to the Stratfordian authorship of the plays is anathema; and this is what he writes with regard to the preparation for publication of the Folio of 1623: “Neither Heminge, nor Condell was a writer, nor such a book ought to be properly introduced. In such a juncture there could be no choice. The best book of the hour demanded sponsorship by the greatest contemporary man of letters. Ben Jonson was the King’s poet, the Laureate, the literary dictator of the age; and Jonson rose nobly to the task, penning not only the epigram ‘To the Reader,’ and his noble personal eulogium, but both the prose addresses of dedication. Of this matter there can be no question whatever and if anyone is troubled by the signatures of Heminge and Condell appended to two addresses which neither of them actually wrote, let him examine into his own conduct in the matter of circulars, resolutions, and other papers which he has had written by skilled competence for the appendage of his signature.”

We will not add any further comments on this subject, since a plethora of scholars have gradually come to a similar belief that the Epistle Dedicatory contains many classical allusions in the Jonsonian style and taken directly from the dedication of Pliny’s *Natural History*. So much then for Heminge and Condell’s honesty.

As to Ben Jonson’s honesty, one can only state that all these facts must have been within his knowledge. The criticisms of scholars and critics is enough to show that the King’s poet, the Laureate was employed to give the volume a good send-off, there is no doubt about it; not only by writing the Prefaces, and making himself responsible for the statements together with those on the two title-pages, but also by the exercise of his poetical genius. He made the Elizabethan age great. It was because of his eminent services to literature, that in 1616 (some say 1619) King James granted him letters patent making him Poet Laureate. Charles had been King five

³⁸⁵ Shakespeare & his Fellows (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1916).

³⁸⁶ Letter on the Authorship of “Two Noble Kinsmen.”

years when he reconsidered this appointment of his father and issued new letters patent to Ben Jonson, which for the first time made the Laureateship a permanent institution.

We need to bring our reader's attention to one fact: The Stratford actor Shakespere, so far as we know, never, from first to last, did or said anything whatever to show that he claimed to be the author of the plays, of the sonnets, or of the poems of William Shakespeare. Yeatman, who wrote ample inquiries on the Stratfordian Shakespere's religion, offers a theory of why the author, Shakespeare, was silent in the publication of his works: "As a Catholic, unless he abjured his faith he could not sue any pirate or even stop his piracy, and therefore his complaints were futile. A writer in *The Shakespearian* has 'corrected the author's law' by pointing out that there was no Copyright Acts till a century afterwards. But Lee is equally at fault; he has no right to blame the poet for these piracies. It was the infamous penal laws which Cecil put in force in his twenty years of resolute government which prevented a Catholic from obtaining protection, and left him at the mercy of every scoundrel who was base enough to profit by them."³⁸⁷

There are many editors who speak of William Jaggard as "the piratical publisher;" whatever literary property then existed at Common law was in the shape of a license to reprint a work under the permission of the Stationer's Company. Once in their hands, printers did what they pleased with a manuscript; abridged it, lengthened it, and altered it. They assigned the authorship to any name they thought would help sell the book, and dedicated it to whom they pleased.³⁸⁸

In the *Catalogus Universalis pro Nundinis Francofurtensis*, a Frankfort book fair list of books to be published in England between April and October 1622, states: "A Catalogue of such books as have been published, and by authority printed in English, since the last *Vernall Mart*, which was in April 1622 till this present October 1622." Further along is an entry of English books: "Plays, written by M. William Shakespeare all in one volume, printed by Isaack Jaggard, in fol." Should this catalogue entry have been a pre-announcement of the upcoming publication of the First Folio, cannot be deduced by any existing evidence today, but there is an irregularity on the printing procedures of the Folio within the catalogue's above title (stating the plays in the Folio were already published by October 1622) since the First Folio was not entered into the Stationers' Register till November 8, 1623. It is believed, that the year 1622 mentioned, triggered the assumption of Fripp's who hypothesized the "Stratford Moniment" was already created by this time.

Ingleby (in 1861) gave an entirely different edition from the First Folio date we know of: "Of this First Folio edition, but one copy is known to be extant bearing the date 1622; all the other known copies bear the date 1623 and the edition is generally quoted as of the latter year." The text of the plays in this edition, "had been published in a finished state" before 1623, in the

³⁸⁷ Is William Shakespeare's Will Holographic? ("The Saturday Review" 1906), 30.

³⁸⁸ Dr. Appleton Morgan, *The Shakespearean Myth* (1881).

Folio edition of that date, generally based upon the early quartos. The Folio that Ingleby commented upon, was the Bridgewater Folio, termed as a “fabrication.”³⁸⁹

III

The Publication

In all logical terms, there is no doubt that the First Folio’s publication would have needed immense dedication: Copyrights to attain or buy; need to obtain a license to print; editorial and dedicatory contributors to collect; paper to buy; press employees to pay; ink to be bought. Those were just a few of the trials and tribulations in those days any printer would need to undertake before such a publication as a Folio edition. It may be determined, that the production of the work (composition, paper, printing and binding) even if only a few hundred copies were made, must have cost at least £250 to £500 (and in all probability much more) which would be an equivalent of around £50,000 in today’s money.

The field of demand for such an edition of luxury could not have been a large one, for the simple fact, that in the year 1623, it would have been quite difficult to have found any bookseller or association of booksellers in London who would embark their money in such ventures. A further minus was that the Folio depicted thirty-six dramas in Folio form without pictorial ornamentation, emblems, and external attractions. Emblems in those days were very much in want: “Our forefathers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, so far as regarded their intellectual capacities, were but children of a larger growth. They needed to be taught, as our little ones now are, by pictures, and they were as easily captivated by them.”³⁹⁰

Furthermore, dramas, and especially modern dramas (and these were modern at that time) were more gladly seen on the stage than read. And, if they are read, the handy quarto edition would have been preferred to the inconvenient Folio volume. One can scarcely avoid noticing that this costly Folio edition must have been paid for by none other than the author himself and that such an author must certainly have given away more copies than he sold. But this is only an assumption, and does not lead us any nearer to the knowledge of who the author actually was.

The Folio’s double columns of 66 lines each composed by a single typesetter figured in continuous application would have demanded 330 twelve-hour days, at two minutes a line; redistribution of type possibly done by the printer’s devil (or errand-boy) taking perhaps as long again. Of course this work would have been required intermittently, allowing for the printer to complete 500 pulls per form, given an edition of 500 copies, both compositor and devil (and perhaps others) occupied in the interim with receiving and hanging fresh sheets and the folding and collating of dry ones.³⁹¹ In other words, the Folio would have needed from 958 days (two years and seven months) up to 1.583 days (four years and four months) to prepare

³⁸⁹ J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Curiosities of Modern Shakespearian Criticism* (London: John Russell Smith, 1853), 8.

³⁹⁰ William Tegg, *Francis Quarles’ Emblems, Divine and Moral* (1866).

³⁹¹ Alfred Pollard, *Shakespeare’s Fight with the Pirates* (Alexander Poring Ltd., 1917).

and publish just 500 copies, although these are consecutive estimates, since the working year with one day off per week, amounting to 313 days, would extend production, to a period of three to five years till the Folio was ready for publication.

Peter Blayney, a well-known authority on old book trades, gives an estimate of only one year production, that being in 1622,³⁹² which would coincide with the *Catalogus Universalis* entry given earlier; and Charlton Hinman gives an opinion that the Folio was in the press for almost two years.³⁹³

As to the price of the First Folio, a reference from Captain William Jaggard enlightens us, which comes from his bibliography: “The published price was twenty shillings. This information is kindly supplied by Mr. R. C. Jackson (originator of the idea of the Bank side national memorial to Shakespeare in Southwark [Cathedral]). He discovered it at Dulwich, on a letter from Cartwright to Edward Alleyn, founder of the College. Cartwright was an intimate friend and guest of Alleyn’s from 1617 onwards. The memoriam runs: ‘Paid a sovereign for Shakespeare’s book of Plays.’ The letter is dated November 30, 1623, the very week of publication.” Blayney, when making a reasonable distinction between publisher and printers, notes the Folio cost the publisher 6s. 8d. which was divided half for printing and the other half for the paper and copies. He continues to tell us the Folio must have been the most expensive playbook that ever came to public, and would have been priced at 15s. unbound, or £1 in plain calf.³⁹⁴ Steevens gave an estimate for the First and Second Folios, when first printed, that they could not have been “rated higher than at 10s. each;” and Lee gives the cost around £1.³⁹⁵

Dr. Morgan wrote an article on the price for publishing the First Folio; the article ran in the “New York Times” of 1901. The doctor turned to a Mr. Theodore L. De Vinne, an expert on the art of printing, for an estimate on how much the Folio could have cost; the response came on April 4, 1901, with the following results:

Typesetting 578 pages, including make-up and proof-reading about 400 days at 10d. per day	£8. 06
Press work 145 days for two men or 290 days at 8d. per day	£4. 17
Paper, 300 reams (not counting outside of retiree sheets at 30d.)	£19. 00
Binding in leather at 14d. each 500	£14. 12
Subtotal	<u>£46. 15</u>

³⁹² The First Folio of Shakespeare (Folger Library Publication, 1991).

³⁹³ Norton’s Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare (New York: Norton & Company, 1996).

³⁹⁴ The First Folio of Shakespeare (Folger Library Publication, 1991).

³⁹⁵ Notes & Additions to the Census of Copies of the Shakespeare First Folio (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), 10.

This is actual cost of labour and material. To this the printer added one-half more for incidentals and profit	£23. 08
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Grand Total £70. 03

After giving the above details, Mr. De Vinne writes: "This grand total (£70. 03) [an equivalent of £7,003 in today's money] was probably what the publisher had to pay. £70. 00 makes the cost per copy (500 in total) about 2s. 9d. The Folio book in 1623 (of four thicknesses) sold for, from 10s. to 12s. This may seem an enormous advance, but it should be recollect the book was slow for sale. If I recollect rightly, it took more than forty years (1623–1664) to sell two editions." Bates (author) on July 17, 1901, wrote a comment on Dr. Morgan's article, and just give an extract of significance: "There seemed to have been an utter forgetfulness of Shakespeare and his works. As to those works, he had not left them to his family, and his family was Puritans who thought plays the works of the devil, and so did all they could to suppress them. Who, then, disbursed the very considerable amount of money [(£70. 03] necessary to print the First Folio?"

The Bodleian Library parted with their First Folio when the third appeared, as being in the eyes of the then librarian of no account when a later edition appeared. Blayney states that, though the Folio's sale had no record breaking numbers, within nine years of its publication, it had sold out; he gives no further information as to the purchases during those nine years, nor gives reference to corroborate his theory.

Lee considers the Folio, ever since it entered into the Stationers' Company on November 8, 1623, to have consisted of 500 copies, judging from the number that existed in the late seventeenth century; scholars have decided that only four editions for the reader amounted in all probability not more than a few thousand copies, and this was held to be true, until the six volume edition of Rowe came to light in 1709, which was followed by the Mendham Fourth Folio printed in 1772. Furthermore, Malone suggested, that "perhaps the original impression of the book did not amount to more than 250; and we may suppose that different fires in London had their share of them. Before the year 1649 they were so scarce, that King Charles I was obliged to content himself with a Folio of 1632."³⁹⁶ Dr. Greg believes a sale of less than 1,000 copies would hardly have repaid the publishers, unless the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery showed munificence.

It is not surprising, that with the publication of the First Folio in 1623, various Shakespearean myths of Authorship began. The question dates from the day that volume left the press. That it was not agitated then, but lay dormant for two hundred and thirty-seven years, is certainly remarkable. But it may be accounted for. The contemporaries of Heming and Condell were not literary controversialists or textual critics. They and the ages that followed were entirely indifferent to the Shakespearean treasury. They did not debate the origin of a diamond they supposed a bit of broken glass. If the motives for investigating the genesis of the plays had

³⁹⁶ Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: Rivington, 1821), Vol. II.

existed in 1623, the controversy would have begun then. We need not doubt that.³⁹⁷ Edward D. Johnson had said: “The Folio must have been one of the most remarkable specimens of typography of the period. It was got up in sumptuous style and regardless of expense. Whoever was financially responsible for its production would naturally desire it to be as perfect from error as possible. How, then, are we to account for these misprints and mispaginations which are too numerous and glaring to escape the notice of the veriest printer’s apprentice? The anomaly between the costliness of the volume and the slovenly editorship suggest that this seemingly culpable carelessness was actually deliberate and intentional.” Johnson does not specify further on these deliberate intentions.

Ignatius Donnelly, in his *The Great Cryptogram* (Vol. I) noted how “it must have required the advance of a large sum to print it. Where did the money come from? It could not have been printed for a less sum than £1,000 of our money. No one of Shakespere’s blood or estate had anything to do with the expenses. The men who put their money in the venture were W. Jaggard, Ed. Blount, J. Smithweeke and W. Aspley. Yet these businessmen did not even secure a title to the work, and noone ever set up any claim to proprietorship.”

IV The Plays

The Taming of the Shrew

“A play in Shakespeare’s day was as often written by two, or three, or four persons as by one; each theatre had several poets and playwrights in its pay, if not in its Company, ready to write or rewrite, as the spirit moved or occasion required; and Shakespeare’s own Company was, of course, not an exception to the general rule. Our *Taming of the Shrew* is an example of the result of this system. In it three hands, at least, are traceable; that of the author of the old play, that of Shakespeare himself, and that of a co-labourer. The first appears in the structure of the plot, and in the incidents and the dialogue of most of the minor scenes; to the last must be assigned the greater part of the love business between Bianca and her two suitors; while to Shakespeare belong the strong, clear characterization, the delicious humour, and the rich verbal colouring of the recast Induction, and all the scenes in which Katherina and Petruchio and Grumio are the prominent figures, together with the general effect produced by scattering lines and words and phrases here and there, and removing others elsewhere, throughout the rest of the play.”³⁹⁸

The play has been dated as early as 1589, though the date of 1590 has been so often suggested by scholars. There is no entry in the Stationers’ Register, no early quarto, no immediate contemporary reference, and its original publication was in the First Folio of 1623.

³⁹⁷ Appleton Morgan, *Shakespearean Commentators* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1882).

³⁹⁸ Frederick Tupper, *The Tudor Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937).

Richard III

The play was likely to have been written about 1591, perhaps first performed late that same year and was first published in quarto in 1597. This tragedy is not separated from the third part of Henry VI by a dramatic interval of one clear day. For although Clarence's arrest, the first incident of the former drama, occurred in 1477, the action scene takes us back to May 23, 1471, when Henry's coarse was conveyed to Chertsey. We do not know when Clarence was arrested, but a probable date is based on the following facts: On May 20, 1477, Burdett and Stacy, dependents of Clarence, were executed for constructive treason.³⁹⁹

On May 21, Clarence came to the Council Chamber at Westminster, accompanied by a priest named Godard, who read before the Council the declarations of innocence made by Burdett and Stacy previous to execution. Presenting this interference, Edward summoned Clarence to appear *certo die* at the palace of Westminster, and there, in the presence of the civic dignitaries, censured him. The Duke was put *sub custodiâ*, and remained a prisoner till his death. Henry died on May 21 or 22 but, even if we assume that May 21 was the date of his death, we can hardly refer the closing scene of 3 Henry VI to the same day. The tragedy of *Richard III* ends with the battle of Bosworth, fought on August 22, 1485.

Henry VI. Part I

The play was first performed in 1592 and originally published in the First Folio of 1623. If the range of this part was measured by historic dates, not by the order in which occurrences are dramatized, it might be said that the time embraced by the action extended from Henry V's funeral, on November 7, 1422,⁴⁰⁰ to Talbot's death on July 17, 1453. But the dramatist has made the latter event precede Jeanne Dare's capture in 1430; as well as the dispatch of Suffolk to Tours in 1444, for the purpose of espousing Margaret and conducting her to England.

Henry VI. Part II

This play was probably written by the year 1591 and first performed that same year, published in quarto in 1594. Historic time in this part commences shortly before Margaret's coronation on May 30, 1445, and ends on May 22, 1455, when the battle of St. Albans was fought. A second battle was fought there on February 17, 1461.

Henry VI. Part III

Scholars are not sure when this part was written; though it is believed by 1592 the first performance of it was in June of that year, and first published in octavo in 1595. Between this part, which was a recast of *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, and the second part, there is a dramatic interval sufficient for a rapid march from St. Albans to London, after the battle at the former place. But the historic time of the third part begins on October 24, 1460, when York was declared heir, and closes with the death of Henry VI on May 21, 1471.

³⁹⁹ D. K. Bep, Vol. III, Appendix II.

⁴⁰⁰ This date is given in Fab. p. 592 and in Wyre. Vol. II. 454.

Titus Andronicus

Again, no sure date of when this play was written, and the year of 1594 is universally acknowledged as being the correct date, since its first recorded performance was in early 1594 and published in quarto of the same year.

Under a date of January 23, 1594, Henslowe makes note in his diary of a new play, "titus & Andronicus," performed by the servants of the Earl of Sussex. On February 6 of the same year there is entered to John Danter in the Stationers' Register a book, entitled: *A Noble Roman Historye of Tytus Andronicus*.

An edition published in 1594 was mentioned by Gerard Langbaine in his *Account of English Dramatic Poets*, in 1691, and a copy of it was at last discovered at Malmo (Sweden) in 1905; it bears the title: "The most Lamentable Romaine Tragedie of Titus Andronicus: As it was Plaide by the Right Honorable the Earle of Darbie, Earle of Pembroke and Earle of Sussex their Servants, London. Printed by John Danter, etc., 1594."

King John

This play has been dated as early as 1590, although it is usually thought of being written between 1593 and 1596. It was originally published in the First Folio of 1623. The Shakespearian play *The Life & Death of King John* opens shortly after the King's first coronation, on Ascension Day, May 27, 1199; and closes with his death on October 19, 1216. This is also the time embraced by an anonymous writer's *Troublesome Reign of John King of England*, in 1591, being a play which Shakespeare has closely followed, without making any independent use of historical sources. The author of *Troublesome Reign of John King of England* probably derived most of his historical matter from Holinshed from whose *Chronicles* the larger part of the succeeding excerpts is taken.⁴⁰¹

Two Gentlemen of Verona

Scholars assume this play was written before 1598, around 1590, due to its mention in Francis Meres's list of Shakespearean works. The play was originally published in the First Folio of 1623. The Proteus-Julia part of the plot comes chiefly from the story of Felix and Felismena in the *Diana of Montemayor*. This Spanish romance appeared in 1560 and the first English version in 1598.

The Comedy of Errors

Its first recorded performance was in 1594, being created between 1589 and 1594, originally published in the First Folio of 1623.

Love's Labour's Lost

This play is usually dated to 1594 and first published in quarto in 1598. There is a perfectly serious word in the play: "Honorificabilitudine" meaning honour in a high degree, with two

⁴⁰¹ It was republished in 1611 as "Written by W. Sh.," and again in 1622 as "Written by W. Shakespeare." The original edition of 1591 has been reprinted in the Quarto Facsimiles (1888) with forewords and illustrative excerpts from Holinshed, by Dr. Furnivall and with Edward Rose's paper on "Shakespeare as an Adapter."

stem roots and three suffixes combined (according to the rules of Medieval Latin). The word can also be found in the following documents and works:

- A Charter granted by *The See of Rome* to a religious house in Genoa in 1187, but not printed until 1614.
- Dante's *De Vulgare Eloquio*, written in or about 1304, translated from the original Latin into Italian and printed for the first time in 1529.
- *De Vulgare Eloquio* (c.1304).
- *The History of Henry VII* of Italy by Albertus Musatus, a work composed between 1313 (date of Henry's death) and 1330 (date of the author's death), first printed in 1635.
- De Gestis Henrici (1313–1330) mentioned the word in one of his works.
- *Complaint of Scotland* (1549) which was first discovered by Mr. George Stronach of Edinburgh, and communicated to the public by the poet Henry Dryer in the *People's Friend* (Dundee) on May 16, 1898.
- Similarity of the word is: "Honorificabilitudinitatibus" in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*.⁴⁰² The first edition of the play was printed in 1598 probably written in, or about 1588.
- *Northumberland Manuscript* (c.1598) as "Honorificabilitudine."

Romeo and Juliet

This play has been assumed to have been written in 1595 and first published in quarto in 1597. The story of Romeo and Juliet is considered to be historically true; the Veronese fix the date of this tragedy as 1303.

King Richard II

Scholars give two dates of when this play was written: 1592 and 1595, since it was first published in quarto in 1597. The first scene in Richard II opens on April 29, 1398, at Windsor, where a day for combat was assigned to Bolingbroke and Mowbray. On March 12, 1400, a body, officially declared to be Richard II's, was exhibited at St. Paul's.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Probably written in 1595 or 1596 and first published in quarto in 1600. This play is considered by critics to have "all the merit of entire originality and incident." The traditions of all Europe and the East, furnished the leading idea of fairy character, while classical mythological history has been drawn upon for the heroic personage.

First Part of King Henry the Fourth

Probably written in 1596 before it was performed. It was first published in quarto in 1598 and was re-titled for the publication in the First Folio of 1623. A more precise date than 1402 cannot be assigned to the opening scene in this play.

⁴⁰² Act V. Sc. 1

Second Part of King Henry the Fourth

It is possibly dated to 1597 and completed by 1598, first published in quarto in 1600. This play is separated from the preceding play by a historic interval of nearly two years, which elapsed between the battle of Shrewsbury on July 21, 1403, and Archbishop Scrope's rebellion in May/June 1405.

The Merchant of Venice

This play can be dated between 1596 and 1598, since it was first performed in the latter year and first published in quarto in 1600. The play is justly placed among the most perfect of Shakespeare's compositions. The masterpiece of character, as exhibited in Shylock the Jew, would alone entitle it to that classification.

Much Ado About Nothing

It was probably written in 1598 and first published in quarto in 1600. On August 23, 1600, the play was entered in the Register for publication by Andrew Wise and William Aspley (1588–1637).⁴⁰³ Various sources have been assigned from which Shakespeare borrowed the story of the comedy: Orlando Furioso, *The Faerie Queen*, and a novel of Bandello's (1554), have been cited as furnishing the original conception of the plot.

Aspley was a stationer and printer apprenticed to George Bishop for nine years from February 5, 1588, and then admitted a freeman of the Stationers' Company on April 11, 1597. He lived at the sign of "The Tiger's Head" in St. Paul's churchyard, and afterwards at "The Parrot." Dealing largely in plays, as may be seen by the numerous licenses obtained by him down to 1627, when his business appears to have declined (1637), he was made warden.

Another famous print of Aspley's is *Eastward Hoe*, which was performed in the Blackfriars by the Children of her Majesty's Revels in 1605, (leading actors being Chapman, Jonson and Marston). The play infuriated King James on account of some sarcastic remarks upon the Scotch, that both the writers and printer were nearly imprisoned.

Aspley was also involved in printing Shakespeare's sonnets, printed by G. Eld, for T. T. (Thomas Thorpe) in 1609 and sold at the sale of Dr. Farmer's library for £8; at Steevens's for £3. 19s.; at the Duke of Roxburghe's for £21; at White Knight's for £37; at Boswell's for £38. 18s., and at Sotheby's in June 1826, for £40. 19s.⁴⁰⁴

Thomas Thorpe (1570–1635) was the son of the elder Thomas, an Innkeeper of Barnet in Middlesex. At midsummer 1584, young Thomas was apprenticed for nine years to a printer and stationer of London (Richard Watkins) and in 1594 he took up the freedom of the Stationers' Company.

A younger brother (Richard) was apprenticed to another stationer (Martin Ensor) for seven years from August 24, 1596.

⁴⁰³ Arber's Transcript, Vol. III. 170.

⁴⁰⁴ Timperley, Encyclopaedia of Anecdote, 2nd Ed. 1842.

Thomas found obscure employment as a stationer's assistant, but in 1600 he became the owner of the unpublished manuscript of Marlowe's translation of *The First Book of Lucan*. Through the good offices of a friend in the trade (Edward Blount, one of the publishers of the First Folio), he contrived to publish it. Thorpe's name did not figure on the title-page, but as owner of the copy he signed the dedication, which he jestingly addressed to his friend Blount.

In 1603, Thorpe again engaged in a publishing speculation, and his name figured on a title-page for the first time. The book was an insignificant pamphlet on the events of the time.

The title pages of nearly all Thorpe's books declared that the volumes were printed for him by one stationer, and were sold for him by another stationer, whose address was supplied. It was only in three of the publications on the title-pages of which Thorpe's name figured, these being: R. West's *Wits A. B. C.*, Chapman's *Byron*, and Ben Jonson's *Masques of Blackness and Beauty*, all dated in 1608, that Thorpe announced, in accordance with the custom of well-established publishers, that he was himself in the occupation of a shop, "The Tiger's Head, in St. Paul's churchyard," where the books could be purchased.

During the other years of Thorpe's publishing career, he pursued his calling without premises of his own, and was dependent on better equipped colleagues in the trade to sell as well as to print the volumes in which he had an interest. Many of his colleagues began publishing operations in this manner, but none except Thorpe is known to have followed it throughout their careers.

Henry V

This play was probably written and performed in 1599 and first published in quarto in 1600. Henry V appears to have received the Dauphin Lewis' ⁴⁰⁵ gift of tennis-balls in Lent, 1414. ⁴⁰⁶ This date marks the commencement of historic time in *The Life of Henry the Fifth*; and the play ends with Katharine of Valois's betrothal in May, 1420.

Julius Caesar

It was most assuredly written to open the new Globe in London in 1599, and originally published in the First Folio of 1623. Here, Shakespeare has been chiefly indebted to Plutarch for his material, and it is no mean praise awarded to him by his commentators, that he has caught the spirit of this great original. The version of Plutarch used, was a translation from the French of Amyot, by Thomas North, which appeared in 1579.

As You Like It

Probably written and first performed in 1599, originally published in the First Folio of 1623, though a quarto edition was planned, but not published, as seen from the entry in the Stationers' Registers of August 4. Though the year is not entered, the preceding entry is for 1600, the one following for 1603; and since it is shown by later entries that *Henry V* was

⁴⁰⁵ Lewis was a contemporary of the events dramatized in *Henry V*, Acts I–IV. He died on December 18, 1415.

⁴⁰⁶ In 1414 Ash Wednesday fell on February 21.

published in 1600, and Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* in 1601, it is the opinion of scholars that this August 4 was in the year 1600.

Shakespeare took the plot of this comedy from a novel called *Rosalynde* written by Thomas Lodge, who borrowed his materials from an old English poem, of the age of Chaucer.

The Merry Wives of Windsor

The play is unlikely to have been written before late 1599 or 1600, and first published in quarto in 1602.

Hamlet

The play has been dated to 1600, although it was revised in 1601. It was first published in a "bad" quarto in 1603, whereas the "good" quarto of 1604 has text nearly twice as long and quite different.

Shakespeare is supposed to have taken the plot of this play from *The History of Hamlet*, as found narrated in *Saxo Grammaticus* (Danish historian). An English translation of this particular story was published, entitled: *Historie of Hamblet, Prince of Denmark*, and from this version, it is conjectured that Shakespeare drew the materials, which have assisted him in this master-piece of tragic composition.

Twelfth Night (or What you Will)

The play was probably written and performed in 1601, and originally published in the First Folio of 1623. Shakespeare appears to have invariably sought for the originals of his plots from sources within his reach. The Italian novelists of his period furnished ample material for his purpose, but although there are traces to be found in the present comedy of incidents, which are evidently borrowed from these sources, yet even the industrious and acute researches of the critics cannot distinctly trace the precise authorities to which he is indebted for the groundwork of this comedy.

Troilus and Cressida

The play was probably written in late 1601, and first published in quarto in 1609.

Othello

This play has been dated between 1601 and 1602, first printed in quarto in 1622. The plot is taken from the *Hecatommithi* (or *Hundred Tales*) of Giraldo Cinthie, an Italian novelist and dramatist of the second class, in the sixteenth century. But although Shakespeare was indebted for the general plan of his plot to the Italian novelist, yet many of the characters are entirely of his own creation.

All's Well That Ends Well

The problem of the date of this play has been complicated by the frequent identification of the play with *Love's Labour's Won* from Francis Meres's list, and by the strong probability that *All's Well* as it has come down to us represents a recasting of an earlier play.

There is no external evidence for the date which is convincing, though it has been dated to 1603 and was originally published in the First Folio of 1623. It was recorded in the Stationers' Register, under date of November 8, 1623, among those "not formerly entered to other men."

The story of the play is drawn from the ninth novel of the third day of the *Decameron*, translated in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. It has been suggested by Klein that the *Virginia* of Bernardo Accolti (of which there are editions from 1513 to 1535), an Italian tragi-comedy based also upon Boccaccio's story, constitutes a supplementary source, but this view has not met with acceptance, and the evidence for it is entirely unconvincing.⁴⁰⁷

Measure for Measure

The play was probably written and first performed in 1604 and was originally published in the First Folio of 1623. The outline of this play is taken from a novel of Cinthio, the Italian novelist and tragic author, to whom Shakespeare was indebted for the story of *Othello*.

King Lear

The play was probably written in 1605 with a known performance in 1606; it was first published in quarto in 1608. Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and a play of untraced authorship, entitled: *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, 1605,⁴⁰⁸ were the chief and most accessible sources from where Shakespeare might have derived the main plot of his drama.⁴⁰⁹

The fountain-head for the story of Lear and his three daughters is the *Historia Britonum*, a chronicle which Geoffrey of Monmouth declared to have translated from a very ancient book written in English.⁴¹⁰

Comparison with the subjoined excerpt from Holinshed (or Hollingshead Raphael 1515–1580), shows the madness of the dramatic Lear, and the fate which befell him and his daughter, with important alterations of the original story. No source for these changes of plot has yet been discovered.

Holinshed was the son of Ralph in Cheshire, said to have been educated at Cambridge, but the evidence is incomplete. He came to London early in the Reign of Elizabeth and obtained employment as a translator in the printing office of Reginald Wolfe who had inherited Leland's notes, and for many years had projected a universal history with maps. The first edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* appeared in 1577. John Hooker (or Vowell), Abraham Fleming, Francis Thynne, and others, produced a second edition, bringing down the English annals to January 1587. In this second edition the text was altered (or modernized) and many new passages were added.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ John L. Lowes, *The Tudor Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922).

⁴⁰⁸ Reprinted in Steevens' *Twenty of the Plays of Shakespeare* (1766), Vol. IV, and in Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Library*, part II. Vol. II. 307-387.

⁴⁰⁹ Some other sources are: Fabyan's *Chronicles* (1516); William Warner's *Albions England* (1586); *The First Part of the Mirour for Magistrates* (1587); *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96).

⁴¹⁰ *Historia Britonum* to Robert Earl of Gloucester (October 31, 1147. Ann. Marg., 14).

⁴¹¹ W. G. Boswell-Stone, *Shakespere's Holinshed* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1896).

Macbeth

The date this play was written was in 1606 and originally published in the First Folio of 1623. The historic time embraced by Macbeth begins in 1040, when Duncan was slain, and ends with Macbeth's defeat by Siward on July 27, 1054. The historic Macbeth, however, escaped from the battle, and was killed in August 1057.

The traditional story of Macbeth, on which this drama is founded, is related by Holinshed in his *Chronicles*, and also by George Buchanan in his Latin *History of Scotland*. Shakespeare is supposed to have availed himself of Holinshed's narrative in the construction of this play, as the incidents introduced are precisely those narrated by the *Chronicles*.

Anthony and Cleopatra

The play was probably written and completed in 1606 and was originally published in the First Folio of 1623.

Timon of Athens

The play has been dated to 1607 and originally published in the First Folio of 1623. No quarto is known, and the play was recorded on the Stationers' Register on November 8, 1623, to Jaggard and Blount (who were among the publishers of the First Folio) as one of the plays of that volume "not formerly entered to other men." The Folio is therefore the only authority for the text.

In the light of the results of modern scholarship it is clear, as was first pointed out by Charles Knight in 1838, that large portions of the play are not by Shakespeare. Timon, the title-character, though very few details of his life have come down to us, was a real person who lived in Athens during the latter part of the fifth century B.C. in the period of the Peloponnesian War. As early as 415 B.C. the Athenian comic dramatists began to refer to him as a well-known man-hater, and from that time a legend about him grew, until in Greek and later in Latin literature he stood as a prominent type figure. The Renaissance revived his fame in Western Europe, and there are many allusions to him by Elizabethan writers. Shakespeare himself mentions him in *Love's Labour's Lost* (IV. iii. 170).⁴¹²

Pericles Prince of Tyre

It is believed the play had been written in collaboration with another uncertain author as late as 1607. It is regarded by all critics as Shakespeare's in whole until 1709, when Nicholas Rowe, in his edition of that year, remarked: "It is owned that some part of *Pericles* was written by him, particularly the last scene." It was generally excluded by editors after 1709 till the time of Malone, who in 1778 declared that *Pericles* was "the entire work of Shakespeare."

The play was first printed in quarto in 1608 but omitted from the First Folio of 1623, and is found in the Stationers' Register of May 20, 1608.

Coriolanus

⁴¹² Robert Fletcher, *The Tudor Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922).

This play is usually dated between 1605 and 1610 and may have been performed in 1608. It was originally published in the First Folio of 1623.

Cymbeline

The play is dated between 1606 and 1611 and originally published in the First Folio of 1623. Holinshed's *Chronicles* contain all the historical or pseudo-historical matter which appears in this tragedy of Shakespeare's.

The Tempest

"This play is allowed by all judges to be one of the strongest testimonials of Shakespeare's poetic power, and of the force of his imagination, which on the doctrine of enchantment (in his time firmly believed) has raised so noble a structure: And from such immoral agents has produced such fine lessons of religion, and morality." ⁴¹³

The play was probably written between 1610 and its first recorded performance being 1611. It was originally published in the First Folio of 1623. *The Tempest* is supposed to be the last production of Shakespeare's as it is generally acknowledged to be the most original and perfect of his works.

The Winter's Tale

Probably written and first performed early in 1611, originally published in the First Folio of 1623; there is neither quarto edition of it, nor any mention of it in the Stationers' Register before that year.

The first known reference to this play is in Forman's note in his *Booke of Plaies*, stating he was present at a performance at the Globe in May 15, 1611.

King Henry VIII

The play is believed to have been written in 1613 and first published in the First Folio of 1623. The meeting of Henry and Francis in June 1520, is a recent event when *The Famous History of the Life of King Henry the Eighth* opens. The action is brought to an end on September 10, 1533, the day of Elizabeth's christening; but Cranmer's appearance before the Council, in July 1544, is dramatized in a preceding scene. ⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³ Anonymous, An Attempt (London: 1749). Privately published.

⁴¹⁴ Act V. sc. iii.

Chapter Five

The Forgers

“A petty sneaking thief I knew.”

—William Blake⁴¹⁵

The great eras of Shakespearean criticism have as yet been also the great eras of literary imposture. Malone’s researches brought up a good many (unbelievable?) traditions and scraps of poetry. Theobald’s deceptive fathering of his plays on Shakespere is notorious; so also are the infamous forgeries of the Irelands. Kirkman’s trade frauds are well known, and several minor transgressors have been pilloried, sooner or later, by the literary detectives.⁴¹⁶

Roberts’ *Printers’ Marks* (1893) tells us that it was not so hard to detect forgeries as we may assume it was: “At one time, a copy, or more correctly a forgery, of a printer’s mark could be detected with comparative ease, even if the body of the book had all the appearance of genuineness.” Yet it is a fact that Rabelais in his early days was the victim of a forger: In 1582, Rabelais had published two legal documents which he believed to be genuine relics of roman antiquity but which were really, due to the humour of two of his contemporaries (Pomponius Laetus and Jovienus Pontanus) forgeries.⁴¹⁷ But greater scholars than Rabelais have been beguiled, even in the field of art.

All life-like portraits are those which represent the very heart of the painter and not of the sitter, for knowing that the obvious test of a newly discovered portrait is its history or pedigree. We may therefore justify how the great collector of Shakespearian relics, Halliwell-Phillipps, without a pedigree, would not look at any article, and another noted scholar, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, refused to consider any portrait that could not be traced to Shakespere’s family or intimate friends. “It would be futile to attempt to make the record of the pretended portraits complete.” Lee wrote. “Upwards of sixty have been offered for sale to the National Portrait Gallery since its foundation in 1856, and not one of these has proved to possess the remotest claim to authenticity.”⁴¹⁸ This is certainly discouraging.

Stopes also had her doubts: “Many other oil paintings and miniatures of unproven authenticity have been put forward as likenesses of the poet, [Shakespeare,] but so diverse are they in their characteristics, that it is impossible that they can be genuine.”⁴¹⁹

Portraits of the sixteenth and seventeenth century were as unreliable as royal favours. When the publisher wanted a portrait to embellish a book to make it sell, he applied to the poor engraver who was usually applying his trade in an attic, to create one. Sometimes engravers

⁴¹⁵ On Cromek.

⁴¹⁶ Samuel Neil, *Shakespere* (London: Houlston & Wright, 1861).

⁴¹⁷ Andrew Lang, *Books and Bookmen Biog. Univ. s. v. “Rabelais.”*

⁴¹⁸ A Life of Shakespeare (London: John Murray, 1922), 29.

⁴¹⁹ Shakespeare’s Environment (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1918), 107.

used old plates, altering or substituting faces as they thought best. In Wivell's *Inquiry* (1827) he takes the authority of Ireland (the father of the infamous Shakespearean forger) on how many portraits examined by him were to be stated as originals.

Hardly anyone cared to possess Shakespeare's portrait, until Aubrey records him to have been "a handsome, well-shaped man." It is but fair to add, that as to portraits, Edmund Spenser (1553–1598)⁴²⁰ stands in precisely the same position as Shakespeare. The portraits claimed for Spenser are hopelessly discrepant; and it is hard to say which should be accepted and which rejected, since forgeries tend to take center stage.

A well-known example of forgery is the equestrian portrait of King Charles I, where after Cromwell assumed rule, a portrait was required, and a fine equestrian engraving was produced. The portraits of the first Charles had been put out of sight, and it was some time before it was discovered that Cromwell's head had been substituted for that of his decapitated victim. No other change was made in the picture.

Why forgery was considered necessary by the greatest experts of the Stratford cult, is beyond any rational thought. So strong has its obsession become, that moral considerations and elementary honesty must go by the board to save the wreck of the good ship called "The Stratford Case." For investigating these forgeries, in digging up the truth, it might be, as Bolton Corney had stated, "the more eminent the man whose course of life prompts our curiosity, the more earnest is our desire to establish those particulars on conclusive evidence. This instinctive desire needs no apology."⁴²¹

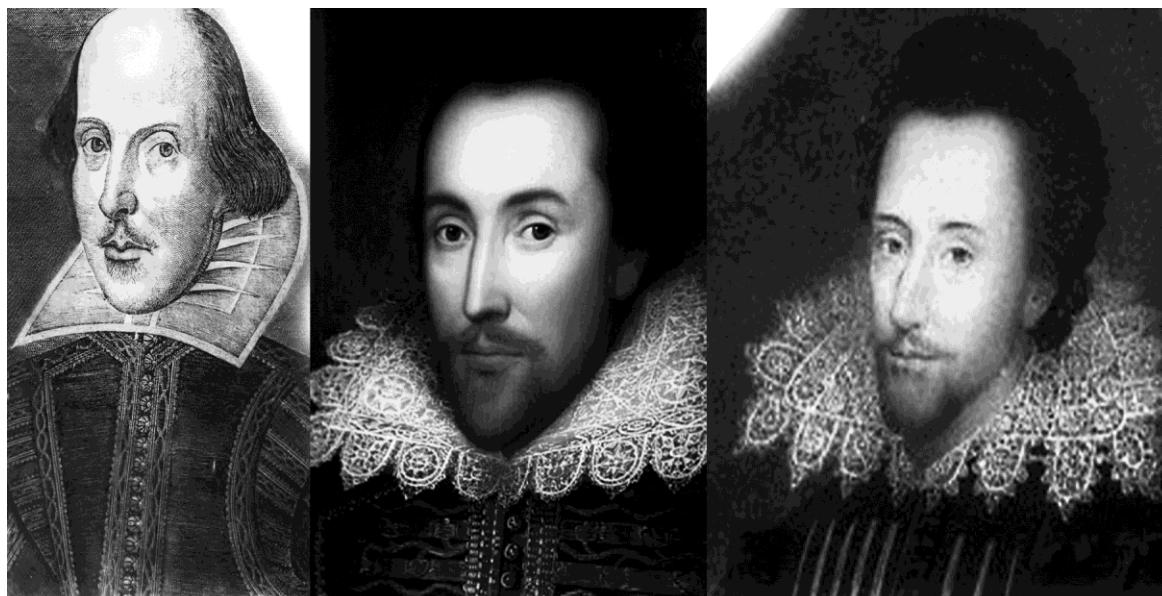
I Shakespeare's Alleged Portraits

The list of portraits, over the centuries, that have popped up for the world's belief that they represent the Immortal Bard, can begin with an alleged portrait, namely, the Cobbe portrait, unveiled at the Stratford Shakespeare Centre on April 23, 2009, as the "newly discovered" Shakespeare portrait. Prior to the exhibition of the Portrait in 2009, the top layer of paint was removed by art conservators in an attempt to uncover suspected original versions beneath,

⁴²⁰ Edmund Spenser was born in East Smithfield. In 1569 he was admitted as a sizar of Pembroke Hall in the University of Cambridge, and he attained the degree of Master of Arts in 1576. He became secretary to Arthur Lord Gray of Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland, who appears to have been his firm and bountiful patron; for the poet terms him "the pillar of his life." The chief occupation of Spenser's life, however, was literature, to which he was ardently attached to the day of his death in January 16. His chief work is his *Faerie Queene*, the object of which is "to represent all the moral virtues, assigned to every virtue a Knight, to be the patron and defender of the same; in whose actions the feats of arms and chivalry, the operations of that virtue whereof he is the protector, are to be expressed, and the vices and unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same are to be beaten down and overcome." Spenser also wrote paraphrases of the *Ecclesiastes*, and of the *Canticum Canticorum*; the *Hours of our Lord*; the *Sacrifice of a Sinner*, and the *Seven Penitential Psalms*, which are irretrievably lost to posterity. (Farr's Select Poetry (1845), Vol. I.) Ben Jonson, in his *Conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden* (1585–1649) wrote: "The Irish having robbed Spenser's goods, and burnt his house and a little child new-born, he and his wife escaped and after he died for lack of bread in King Street, and refused twenty pieces sent to him by my Lord of Essex, adding, 'he was sorry he had no time to spend them.'"

⁴²¹ An Argument on the Assumed Birthday of Shakespere (Privately published in 1864).

then restored in 2002. However, the restoration was termed as an attempt “not so smart;” removing the layer has robbed us of potential rare insights, and any physical evidence that could have been detected, is now removed.



DROESHOUT COBBE OVERBURY

Figure 19: Droeshout, Cobbe & Sir Thomas Overbury

The portrait belonged to Alec Cobbe's family for more than 250 years; it hung in an Anglo-Irish country house outside of Dublin. A descendant of the family (Charles Cobbe) left Hampshire to become the archbishop of Dublin; he built Newbridge House in 1737, where among the treasures piled in the home were Tudor manuscripts in Latin and memorabilia from Captain Cook's sea voyages; these were left behind by Cook's surgeon who was a tenant at the time. Among such admirable relics, was the Cobbe portrait.

In 2009, Prof. Stanley W. Wells (b.1930)⁴²² revealed the existence of the Cobbe portrait. (Figure 19) He stated his belief, based on three years of research, that the portrait is a true figure of William Shakespeare, painted from life; he then spearheaded a press conference unveiling the portrait as the centrepiece of the exhibition, which was called “Shakespeare Found.” His support is especially surprising given how quickly and credibly other scholars, such as Oxford's Katherine Duncan-Jones, have presented evidence that the portrait is not of Shakespeare at all but rather of a Jacobean contemporary, Sir Thomas Overbury (1581–1613). The three year research Wells had undertaken was some “science” which involved a “tree-ring” study of the wooden frame of the portrait, which made it possible to detect the study of the

⁴²² Wells is the Chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. He took his first degree at the University College of London, and was awarded an honorary DLitt by the University of Warwick in 2008. He was professor of Shakespeare Studies and Director of the Shakespeare Institute (University of Birmingham) from 1988 to 1997, and is currently Emeritus Professor of Shakespeare Studies.

frame as being genuine and coming from the Elizabethan era. What was questionable was Wells's assumption that the face depicts the Bard's. There have been no genuine portraits depicting the Bard's features. Wells no doubt placed the comparison on the Martin Droeshout image in the First Folio (1623), which was an erroneous decision, to say the least. However, Wells has rejected objections that have been raised about the Droeshout image "looking too different" from the Cobbe portrait by saying that "painters (like photographers) have ever flattered. Droeshout simplified the portrait for his brass plate;" Wells also added how engravers "usually did simplify and update."

Martin Droeshout resided in England about the year 1623, the same year the Folio was published. He was chiefly employed by the booksellers (as was Leonard Digges) and engraving some portraits, which, "if they cannot be admired for the beauty of their execution, are valued for their scarcity."⁴²³ Droeshout is known to be "one of the indifferent engravers" of his century.⁴²⁴ Ee looked into his biography earlier, so will not repeat it here.

It hardly is sensible, upon the evidence given earlier in regards to Droeshout, for Wells to regard Droeshout's image as being an authentic image of the Bard. Not only that, but to compare the Cobbe portrait with Droeshout's sketch, coming to a conclusion that it is Shakespeare, is a misconception leading to exaggerated eagerness, and does not help us truly find Shakespeare. "The biographers must re-write their Lives of Shakespeare." Said an eighteenth century critic.

Coming down to the Cooper portrait, it was once in the possession of a Mr. Stace. The portrait had been engraved by Robert Cooper in 1811, and was termed a forgery almost immediately upon its discovery.

Felton's portrait has been mentioned in Steevens's Preface to Richardson's *Proposals*: "On the back of the Felton picture, is the following inscription, written in a very old hand: 'Guil. Shakspeare, 1597, R. N.' Whether these initials belong to the painter, or a former owner of the picture, is uncertain." It was in August of 1794, that the Felton picture was found at a broker's shop in the minories, "whose name must be concealed" for some reason, as it was a part of that gentleman's collection of paintings to be sold at the European Museum. Abraham Wivell had the following to say about the portrait: "When I was making a drawing from the picture, I observed two holes made in the back, apparently to ascertain if it was old wood. I found it to be in a very decayed state, and begged permission of Mr. Nicol, to nourish the back with some linseed oil, which was granted, and, by so doing, the writing became more intelligible than it had been, when only wetted with water, and instead of 'R. N.' as we have hitherto been led to believe, I discovered those important letters, 'R. B.' which could refer to no other person than Richard Burbage. As I have no wish to have the picture considered genuine, without circumstantial evidence, it would be unjust to see it condemned without a fair trial."⁴²⁵

⁴²³ George Williamson, Brian's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1903), Vol. II.

⁴²⁴ Joseph Strutt, Biographical Dictionary of Engravers (London: 1785), Vol. I. 264.

⁴²⁵ Inquiry into the History, Authenticity & Characteristics of the Shakespeare Portraits (Privately published at 40, Castle Street East, Oxford Street, 1827).

Commentators made very severe attacks on the portrait; James Boaden could not accept its authenticity, due to the deception practiced by the Irelands, and the former used all his ingenuity to finally prove the Felton portrait a forgery.

Coming to the Cornelius Jansen portrait, it is connected with the publication of the play *King Lear* in 1770; the play was published by White, in Fleet Street, as a specimen of what the editor intended with respect to the whole of Shakespeare's works. The edition was prefixed to a very delicate mezzotinto by R. Earlom, from an alleged original portrait of Shakespeare in the possession of Charles Jennens, of Gopsal, in Leicestershire, who was the patron and real editor of the work. He had exceptional convincing beliefs of the portrait's authenticity. What communication Jennens made upon the subject of this picture (to the critics of his time) cannot be discovered: Under his print from it, he merely states that it was painted by Cornelius Jansen, and even the print exhibited sufficient evidence in those days. But as other portraits, the Jansen was also categorized as spurious.

We now come to the Dunford portrait. A picture dealer (Hilder) in Gray's Inn Lane had commented that he saw the Dunford portrait being altered into that of Shakespeare by Holder, and afterwards sold to a man called W. F. Zincke; a picture consisting of a man, his wife and children, all of whom were separated by him and converted into portraits of Shakespeare. This clearly termed the Dunford portrait a forgery. Needless to say, the Stratford portrait is also an alleged portrait of Shakespeare, painted on canvas, three-quarter life-size, which had been in the family of W. O. Hunt, who was the Town Clerk of Stratford for a century. The portrait was given to a Simon Collins who lived in London at the time of his visit to the town. Collins, after removing the dirt, damp, and repainting over the image, exclaimed that this cleansing had brought to light what he pronounced to be a genuine portrait of the Bard. He never alluded to which portrait he compared it with, when he mentioned this assumption, and the portrait has remained in doubt of its authenticity, as the Ashborne portrait has that was purchased by Clements Kingston, of Ashborne in Derbyshire some time prior to March 1847. All that is known concerning it, is set down in the following letter written by Kingston to Wivell.

Grammar School, Ashborne

March 8, 1847

Dear Sir:

I return you many thanks for your kind offer, and also for the candid and open manner in which you express yourself. I am perfectly aware of the innumerable deceptions and frauds of every possible kind which are practiced upon the unwary connoisseur, having given my attention to paintings for the last ten or fifteen years; but I am happy to say nothing of the kind has taken place with regard to the picture in question. The way in which I happened to come into possession of it was this: A friend in London sent me word that he had seen a portrait of Shakespeare, that he was positive it was a genuine picture, and that the owner only valued it as being a very fine painting. Being too poor to purchase it for himself, he advised me by all means to have it. I immediately wrote back requesting him to secure me the prize. Since being in my possession it has been merely relined, and is in most excellent preservation. Of the genuineness of it I have not the slightest doubt whatever, or I should not have asked so

valuable an opinion as yours. In fact, and I speak it with the utmost confidence (though I am sure you will consider me too bold), I really believe it to be the best, and certainly the most interesting portrait of the immortal bard in existence.

The size of the picture is three feet ten inches, by three feet, and represents him, the size of life, down to the knee. His right arm is leaning upon a skull, and in that hand he holds a book, upon the cover of which, amongst the ornamental details, is the crest of the Shakespeare family, and the tragic mask. This is too small to have been put on by any party wishing to pass the portrait off as genuine; for ninety-nine out of a hundred would never notice it; and moreover I will warrant every portion of the picture to have been painted at the same period. In the left hand upper corner, in characters of the period, is: *Ætatis svæ. 47 A° 1611*. The shape of the face and countenance altogether greatly resemble those in the picture belonging to the Duke of Somerset; in fact so very similar do they appear, that, judging from the engraving, I could fancy the two portraits to be the production of the same hand, but the original picture belonging to the Duke I have not seen. To sum up, I will warrant my picture to have been purchased in its original state, and that the canvas, is peculiarly of the period in which Shakespeare lived; that it has never been retouched since it was painted, and therefore that whatever detail there may be on it (which I consider gives more weight than anything), was certainly every touch, painted with the portrait itself. Should you, after this description, think the matter worthy of your further attention, I will either arrange for the picture being sent to you, or if you will oblige me by saying what your travelling expenses would be, I will send you the sum required. In the meantime, I remain, dear sir, in haste.

Yours very truly,

Clements Kingston.

Regarding the Hampton Court portrait (resting in Hampton Court Palace), it was an old painting which hung near the top of a large room with a high ceiling. It was so high from the ground that it was difficult to say what it was. Later it was hung lower, and was then claimed to represent Shakespeare. The portrait represents the figure almost to the knees. The face is more like the Chandos portrait than any other, but the nose is longer. The forehead is very similar to that portrait, but the eyes are blue instead of dark brown as in the Chandos, and the hair is nearly black as compared with the auburn or dark brown of the latter. The mouth, moustache and beard on the cheeks and chin are very similar to those of that portrait, but the dress is entirely different. Above the head is the inscription, "Ætat. suæ. 34." It evidently was deduced to be a genuine portrait of the times, but whether it represents Shakespeare or not is a matter which will probably never be known. Through time, the Arundel Society published a photograph of this portrait which gives a very good representation of it, but the cracks in the varnish show more distinctly in the photograph than in the picture.

There is also the Hilliard Miniature portrait, allegedly representing Shakespeare with a somewhat receding forehead, which is much lower than in the other portraits, and the hair, which is also lighter, grows forward in the centre of the forehead, and recedes high up at the sides. The miniature only shows the figure a little below the shoulders. It has never been established as an absolute authentic portrait of Shakespeare.

The Warwick portrait is among other portraits in Warwick Castle. It is one which has been there for many years, and which has always been believed to be a portrait of Shakespeare. Its history, however, is unknown, and who painted it, where it came from, and other details which would enable one to decide upon its claims to be a genuine, are unfortunately all matters of conjecture.

Another unsubstantiated portrait is the Jennings Miniature (or Auriol miniature). It was contained in an enamelled gold locket, which was formerly set with pearls being the property of Constantine Jennings, of Battersea, who had borrowed £700 on its security. For such a security, either the jewels which the locket formerly contained were valuable, or the missal was of great rarity and value. When the miniature and locket were put up for sale at Christie's in London on February 1827, it was bought by Charles Auriol, for nine and a half guineas. Previous ownership was by a Wise Jennings who claimed to have traced the possession of the miniature back to the Southampton family, but no proof of this exists.

Turning to the Burn portrait, in oil and on canvas, it is about eighteen inches high by fifteen inches wide, the face well drawn with an animated expression. It bears considerable resemblance to the effigy in Stratford, except that the hair is much more profuse than in the latter. What the portrait's history is, or who painted it, is unknown. However, it is considered by its owner to be a genuine portrait, as does the owners of the Lumley portrait which originally formed part of the collection of paintings at Lumley Castle, Durham. In 1785, the pictures at the Castle were sold at auction. Who purchased the portrait in question is not known, but subsequently it was repurchased, together with a number of other paintings, by the Earl of Scarborough, who was a relative of Lord Lumley. The portrait remained in the possession of the Earl of Scarborough's family until 1807, when it was sold again, together with other portraits.

As regards the Boston Art Museum portrait, it has the following inscription: "William Shakespeare. Painted by Federigo Zuccaro. 1595." The portrait was found in three pieces in pulling down an old house on the Surrey side of the Thames where the Globe Tavern and theatre once stood. No other history of the portrait is known.

There is a brief pedigree for the Challis portrait that belonged to Thomas Challis, a banker, residing in West Smithfield, London; he purchased this portrait from one of his old clerks. The latter had bought it at an auction sale from a Dr. Black. The portrait is painted in oil, on a panel which is cracked in two places. These cracks have been carefully repaired, and the background and costume of the figure restored. The cracks did not pass through the face, which is in a good state of preservation.

For the pedigree of the Zoust portrait, nothing is known except that it depicts a delicate expression on the face, and is shown in a three-quarter view.

Another extraordinary image is the Zuccheri portrait. It was formerly in the possession of a Mr. R. Cosway at whose house the author, Boaden had seen it. Cosway claimed that it was an

original portrait of Shakespeare. It is on panel, and on the back of the picture are the words: "Guglielm. Shakespeare." Nothing further is known concerning the history of this portrait. Cosway did not give Boaden any information, beyond his belief that it was an original by the painter Zucchero.

For the Boardman Miniature portrait, it can be seen to be on copper, seven and a quarter inches high, and five and a half inches wide. It is enclosed in an old carved oak frame, formerly gilt, and was in the possession of a Dr. G. W. W. Firth, a surgeon that resided in Norwich, England. On the top of the frame there is a scroll, with the Coat-of-Arms of Shakespeare, a Crest, and the motto: *Non sans droyt* or "not without right."

Turning to the Stace portrait, it belonged to Mr. Machell Stace, from whom this portrait receives its name. He was a bookseller and dealer in pictures and resided in Middle Scotland Yard, London. Prior to 1811, he bought the picture from a Mr. Linnell, of Streatham Street, Bloomsbury, who had purchased it from a Mr. Tuffing living in Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. The portrait had been sold at auction, with other pictures which belonged to John Graham, who had purchased it from a Mr. Sathard, owner of a tavern called "The Old Green Dragon Public House." Sathard bought it at a sale at another tavern rejoicing in the classic name of "The Three Pigeons," where it was said to have been for many years. Such is the pedigree of this portrait as given by Machell Stace.

The O'Connell portrait, which has no history, was in the possession of O'Connell, of Laurel Street, London, who claimed that it was the work of Mark Garrard. The portrait is in very dilapidated condition, owing to bad usage and the thinness of the colours and want of body. It is on canvas, life size, and represents the figure to the waist. Friswell was of opinion that it was probably the work of Mark Garrard, but considered it very doubtful if it was ever intended to represent Shakespeare.

The Gilliland portrait comes next, formerly in the possession of Thomas Gilliland, of London. The portrait is on canvas, but the latter has been mounted on board. The only history we have of it is from the following extract dated April 3, 1827: "This portrait of Shakespeare I cut from a picture about three feet square, containing several other portraits in the same style of work. The picture was recently bought at the Custom House, by a picture dealer, of whom I purchased it, under a strong impression that it was painted about the time of Shakespeare, either by an artist who had seen him, or who copied a genuine portrait of the poet now lost, as this likeness differs from all the portraits hitherto published or known."

The Hardie portrait, purporting to represent Shakespeare, was formerly in the possession of a Dr. Hardie, of Manchester, England. At one time it was regarded by some persons as a genuine picture, but Wivell subsequently discovered that it was a forgery by the painter Zincke who had altered it from the portrait of a French dancing master, which he purchased for a few shillings.

The Liddell portrait is painted on an oak panel, and is three-quarter size. It was purchased by Thomas Liddell, of Portland Place, London, from a Mr. Lewis, of Charles Street in Soho, for £39. It strongly resembles the effigy in Stratford, but Wivell noticed (when he went to see it prior to 1827), that the hair, beard, mouth, and ruff seemed to have been altered from their original appearance.

Another portrait, the Dunford, was once owned by a print-seller in 1814, named Dunford. He purchased it from Edward Holder, a repairer of old paintings, for four guineas. Wivell ascertained that it was a forgery, and that it had been altered from a picture which Edward Holder purchased for a few shillings.

Coming to the Winstanley portrait, in February 10, 1819, Thomas Winstanley, an auctioneer of Liverpool, wrote a letter to the "Literary Gazette," which was published in February 20 of that year. In this issue, Winstanley described a portrait of Shakespeare in his possession, which he stated he had purchased from a dealer, who had obtained it from a pawnbroker. He also said that a friend, whose opinion of a work of art was of much value, had noticed it to be the work of Paul Vansomer; that it was in a fine state of preservation, and had the appearance of having been painted in Shakespeare's time. Nothing further is known of the portrait's pedigree.

Finally, the Zincke and Talma portraits have interesting pedigrees. W. F. Zincke, an artist who seems to have collaborated with Edward Holder in the manufacture of spurious portraits of Shakespeare, was the painter of this portrait. It is in an oval and shows the full face. The shape of the head, the arrangement of the hair and beard, all bear considerable resemblance to the Stratford effigy, which Zincke appears to have taken as his model. The portrait was sold by one Mr. Foster to a Mr. Allen for a small sum. Foster told Wivell (in 1827) that he knew it was not an original portrait, and he had sold about thirty of "these mock original Shakespeares," and never got more than six or eight guineas for them.

II

Important Forgeries

Leaving the spurious portraits, we turn our reader's attention to the Library at Bridgewater House, that holds a large Folio containing six documents, all forgeries, except the fourth which is genuine: "The opinions of the two Chief Justices of either bench concerning the jurisdiction authority and liberties claimed by the Citizens of London within the precinct of the late dissolved houses of the white and black Fryers of London delivered the 26 xxvijth of January, 1579." ⁴²⁶

There is a forged letter in the Dean and Chapter of Chester's Museum purporting to be from Shakespeare to Lord Southampton, which, to do them justice, the Stratfordians ignore. That this forgery should continue to be exhibited under such auspices as in a museum, is not very creditable to the clerical authorities.

⁴²⁶ Nicholas S.E.A. Hamilton, *An Inquiry* (London: Richard Bentley, 1860).

The British Museum today, no longer catalogue a forged item of Ireland's which was entitled: *The Southampton Shakespeare Collection (1609)*. Yet there is a more interesting area where a little volume of short poems, attributed to Shakespeare, printed about 1660 is preserved in the Bodleian Library, entitled: "Cupid's Cabinet Unlock't, or the New Academy of Complements, Odes, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonnets, Poesies, Presentations, Congratulations, Ejaculations, Rhapsodies, &c., with other various fancies. Created partly for the delight, but chiefly for the use of all Ladies, Gentlemen, and Strangers, who affect to speak Elegantly, or write Quietly. By W. Shakespeare." One of the poems contained in the volume begins: "From the rich Lavinian shore," and is entitled: *Shakespeare's rime which he made at the Mytre in Fleet Streete*. "We must be cautious in adding to the works of Shakespeare from such sources;" Halliwell-Phillipps cautioned. "for these being erroneously attributed to his pen merely prove his popularity, and is not evidence in favour of his having had a share in their composition."⁴²⁷

In the British Museum is a copy of Montaigne's *Essays* (1603) translated by John Florio (d.1625)⁴²⁸ and bearing the alleged autograph "Willm Shakespere." This copy was purchased for the museum in 1837 by Sir Frederick Madden, then Keeper of the Manuscripts, for the sum of £140. Sir Madden, who was the greatest authority of his day on archaic handwriting, vouched for the authenticity of this autograph, and Knight, who gave a facsimile of it in his *Pictorial Shakespere*, pronounced it an "undoubted signature" of Shakespeare: "The controversies about the greatest poet of England begin with the spelling of his name. The three signatures to his will are so obscure that it is difficult to determine whether he wrote his name Shakespere or Shakspeare. The autograph in the copy of Florio's Montaigne, purchased by the British Museum, is decidedly Shakespere. In a mortgage-deed by the Corporation of London it is Shakespere. In the Stratford Registers of his own baptism and burial, and of the baptism of his children, it is Shakespere. In the Folio of 1623 it is Shakespeare. The most usual mode in which the name was written appears to have been Shakespere."⁴²⁹ Regarding Sir Madden's findings of Montaigne's *Essays*, this is what he said:

By the assistance of my friend, Charles Frederick Barnwell, of the British Museum, I am enabled to lay before the Society an accurate facsimile of the signature of this great man, written on the fly-leaf of a volume which, there is every reason to believe, once formed a part of his library, and which has hitherto, strange to say, been hidden from the knowledge and indefatigable researches of the whole host of Shakespearian commentators, collectors, and illustrators. The precious volume which I have thus introduced to your notice is a copy of the first edition of the English translation of Montaigne's *Essays*, by John Florio, printed in Folio, 1603, and its fortunate owner is the Rev. Edward Patteson, of East Sheen,

⁴²⁷ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

⁴²⁸ John Florio's birth date is uncertain; some say he was born in 1545 others have his birth in 1553. Regardless, he was an author and translator of the Montaigne *Essays*, which was licensed to Edward Blount in 1599, but not published until 1603. Florio's father was a Protestant exile and Italian preacher in London, but unpleasant charges were brought against his moral character, and he lost his post and his patrons. The son (John) appears as a private tutor in foreign languages at Oxford about 1576, and two years later published his work, entitled: *First Fruits*, being a collection of English and Italian dialogues. Florio died of the plague at Fulham. (Chambers' Cyclopaedia of English Literature (W. & R. Chambers, Ltd., 1901), Vol. I. 261.

⁴²⁹ Pictorial Shakespere, Comedies, Vol. I. 3, 78.

in Surrey, to whom the Society will be indebted, in common with myself, for any gratification they may receive from the present communication. Of its history nothing more can be stated than this, that it belonged previously to Mr. Patteson's father, the Rev. Edward Patteson, Minister of Smethwick, in Staffordshire, about three miles from Birmingham, and thus contiguous to the county which gave Shakspeare birth.

How or when this gentleman first became possessed of it is not known; but it is very certain that, previous to the year 1780, Mr. Patteson used to exhibit the volume to his friends as a curiosity, on account of the autograph. No public notice of it, however, was at any time made; and, contented with this faint notoriety, the autograph of Shakspeare continued to slumber in the hands of this gentleman and his son, until by the friendly representations of Mr. Barnwell, the present owner was induced to bring it to the British Museum for inspection. Now, imperfect as this information is, yet it is ample of itself to set at rest all doubts that might at first naturally arise in the minds of those who are acquainted with the forgeries of Ireland, since, at the period when this volume was assuredly in the library at Smethwick, and known to contain Shakspeare's autograph, this literary impostor was scarcely born. This fact must at once obviate any scruples in regard to the autograph now brought forward, having emanated from the same manufactory which produced the 'Miscellaneous Papers.'"

Sir Madden obviously forgot Steevens (born in 1736) who forged many literary works of Shakespeare's as a vitriolic jest against Malone. The Keeper of the Manuscripts also forgot the forger John Jordan who was born in 1746. Either of these persons could produce manuscripts and signatures to their heart's content.

For myself, I may be permitted to remark, that the forgeries of Chatterton and Ireland have always appeared to me thoroughly contemptible, and utterly unworthy of the controversy they occasioned; indeed, they can only be justly characterized in the words of Malone, as 'the genuine offspring of consummate ignorance and unparalleled audacity.' The only possible objection which might arise in the mind of a skeptic is this; whether there might not have been living at the same time other persons of the name of Shakspeare, to one of whom the volume might have belonged? In reply to this it must be remarked, first, that on comparing the autograph before us with the genuine signatures of the will, and on two legal instruments, there is a sufficient resemblance to warrant the conclusion that they are by the same hand, although enough variation to preclude the idea of imitation; and, secondly, that the contents of the volume itself come in aid, and afford additional evidence of the genuineness, as well as add to the interest of the autograph; for it is well known that this book was consulted by Shakspeare in the composition of his plays.

It is peculiar how Sir Madden had come to such a conclusion as related above, and only based his authenticity on the actor's "signatures of the will, and on two legal instruments." We have no authority telling us of a document that holds the original writing (or signature for that matter) of William Shakespeare to compare with.

“Since I commenced this paper, I have discovered that two other volumes claim the honour of containing Shakspeare’s autograph, not manufactured by Ireland. The first of these is a copy of Warner’s *Albion’s England*, 4to. 1612, which was bought at the Steevens’ sale in 1800, by Mr. Heber, and which is now in the British Museum. On the title-page is ‘William Shakspeare his booke;’ and it will be evident to anyone who takes the trouble of comparing it with the similar notorious forgeries of Ireland on a copy of Holland’s translation of Pliny, Folio 1601, and on *Bartholomeus de Proprietatibus Rerum*, Thomas Berthelet, [1535], fol. in Sir Joseph Banks’ library, that they all three are traced by the same hand. Whether Steevens had any hand in Ireland’s fabrications is a discussion foreign to my purpose; but I do not think it very improbable. The second claimant is a copy of Bacon’s *Advancement of Learning*, 1605. In 1829 it was in the possession of Mr. Thomas Fisher, of the East India House, and is described as being filled with MS. notes. It bears the same signature as in Warner’s work, and a facsimile of it is given by Nichols, in his *Autographs*. From an inspection of this (for I have not seen the volume itself) I should unhesitatingly say, that the signature is a modern fabrication; and subsequent inquiry has placed the fact beyond all question.”⁴³⁰

In Wheller’s 1834 *Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon*, is the mention made of a forgery of Shakespeare’s name, executed by John Jordan, author of a poem called *Welcombe Hills*, which was then ascertained to be the one referred to in the text that Sir Madden states above. Sir Edward M. Thompson, who was Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum from 1888 to 1909, had pronounced the signature on Montaigne’s *Essays* an “undoubted forgery,” which would make this an instructive controversy, even in our times. The most eminent paleographer of yesterday vouches for the authenticity of an alleged Shakespere signature, which he pronounces undoubtedly genuine, while the most eminent paleographer of later days tells us that the same signature is an “undoubted forgery.”

There is every possibility that the Shakespere signature on the deed of a mortgage, had been fabricated. The document was found, as well as the deed of purchase, by a Mr. Wallis, among the family muniments of Fetherstonehaugh. It was later presented to David Garrick the actor, whose wife lent it to George Steevens the forger, to publish in his edition of Shakespeare, in 1790. Either being misplaced by Steevens, or mishandled, it was not to be found in the year 1796 when looked for, but had returned into the possession of Wallis, who was one of David Garrick’s executors.

About the year 1841, this mortgage reappeared, and was exhibited by Collier, another forger, at a meeting of the Shakespeare Society, together with the deed of purchase, which had been borrowed from the City of London Library, for that occasion.

⁴³⁰ Observations on an Autograph of Shakespeare (London: Rodd, Great Newport, 1838).



Figure 20: George Steevens (1736–1800)

The owner of the mortgage was the son of Wallis's partner who in 1858 sold it by auction; it later became the property of the British Museum for £316. The document is on parchment, like the other deed, has four seals attached to it, one opposite the name of each of the witnesses, who are the same to each document; and both are signed by "Wm. Shakespeare, Wm. Johnson and Jo. Johnson." ⁴³¹ The curiosity lies in the persons who presented the pre-mentioned documents; both men (Steevens and Collier) were scoundrel forgers, and of Steevens, this is what is known.

George Steevens was born at Poplar, in the county of Middlesex in 1736. His father was engaged in business connected with the East India Company, which offered handsome fortune. Young Steevens was educated at Kingston-upon-Thames, where he had for his school-fellows George Keats (poet) and Edward Gibbon (historian). In 1753, Steevens went to King's College, Cambridge, but left without taking a degree, accepting a commission in the Essex militia; around 1763, his father died, and the youngster inherited sufficient possessions which allowed him to devote himself to his literary pursuits. In the last two years of his life, he continued with his Shakespearean literature, and died January 22. He was buried in Poplar

⁴³¹ George Wise, *The Autograph of William Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: Peter E. Abel, 1869).

chapel. Steevens “the Puck of commentators” as Gifford called him, became a bitter rival of Malone, and used to amuse himself by inventing imaginary facts about Shakespeare and communicating them under pseudonyms to some journal which Malone was sure to see. If he was led to quote them, Steevens would gravely correct the error over his own signature. These foolish excursions seem to have stimulated the notable activity of forgers which persisted from 1780 to 1850, of which frauds have caused students so much perplexity that it may be useful to warn them against those Shakespearean forgeries which have obtained the widest notoriety.

Remaining on Shakespeare’s spurious signatures, they can also be traced to France, appearing around 1840 in Paris, and regrettably traveled into English and American collections by the French forger Vrain Lucas. He was middle age and fairly educated who, with the most astounding audacity, and with unusual skill, great perseverance, and information gained from much reading, manufactured no less than 27,000 pieces of forged material (Shakespeare’s among them) which he sold to Michel Chasles, a noted geometer and mathematician during a period of eight years, for the sum of 140,000 francs. “How M. Chasles could have been so easily and completely deceived and imposed upon is a marvel.” Says Simon Gratz. “It seems that, at one time during his dealings with the forger, his suspicions were aroused and expressed; but they were quieted when Lucas promptly offered to take back everything he had sold and to return the money that had been paid him.”⁴³²

In the “Theatrical Review” of 1763 (No. 2) there was inserted in an anonymous biography of Edward Alleyn from the pen of George Steevens; a letter purporting to be signed “G. Peel” and to have been addressed to Marlowe “Friend Marie.” The writer pretends to describe his meeting at the Globe with Edward Alleyn and Shakespeare, when Alleyn taunted the dramatist with having borrowed from his own conversation the “speech about the qualities of an actor’s excellency, in *Hamlet* his tragedy.” This clumsy fabrication was reproduced in the *Annual Register* (1770); in Berkenhout’s *Biographia Literaria* (1777); in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1801); in the *British Critic* (1818); in Charles Severn’s Introduction to *John Ward’s Diary* (1839); in the *Academy London* of January 18, 1902; in *Poet Lore* (April 1902), and elsewhere.

Alexander Dyce, in his first edition of George Peele’s *Works* (1829) reprinted the letter with a very slender reservation; Dyce’s example was followed in William Young’s *History of Dulwich College* (1889). Though the fabricated letter was published over a span of two-hundred years, it was justly denounced without much effect by D’Israeli in his *Curiosities of Literature* (1823) and by Lee in an article entitled *A Peril of Shakespearean Research*.⁴³³ The futile forgery still continues to mislead unwary inquirers who unearth it in early periodicals and works.

Of much interest is a large portion of the Harleian Collection, now displayed in the British Museum that was purchased by Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, from the non-juror named Thomas Baker, a fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge. The manuscripts, which are bound in several large volumes (Figure 21) consist of many documents of surpassing literary and political interest; documents which Baker declared in his last Will & Testament were of his

⁴³² Simon Gratz, *A Book About Autographs* (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1920).

⁴³³ Shakespeare and the Modern Stage (1906), 188-197.

“own handwriting having been copied from originals” none of which originals are now known to be in existence. A further fifteen of these Folio volumes were given to St. John’s College and the manuscripts in them are likewise averred by Baker, to be all in his handwriting. When Mr. Bennet, the editor of Ascham’s English works complained that these documents “are unskillfully transcribed” Mr. Masters, in explanation, pointed out that this is due to “their being copied from the original according to the old way of spelling.”⁴³⁴

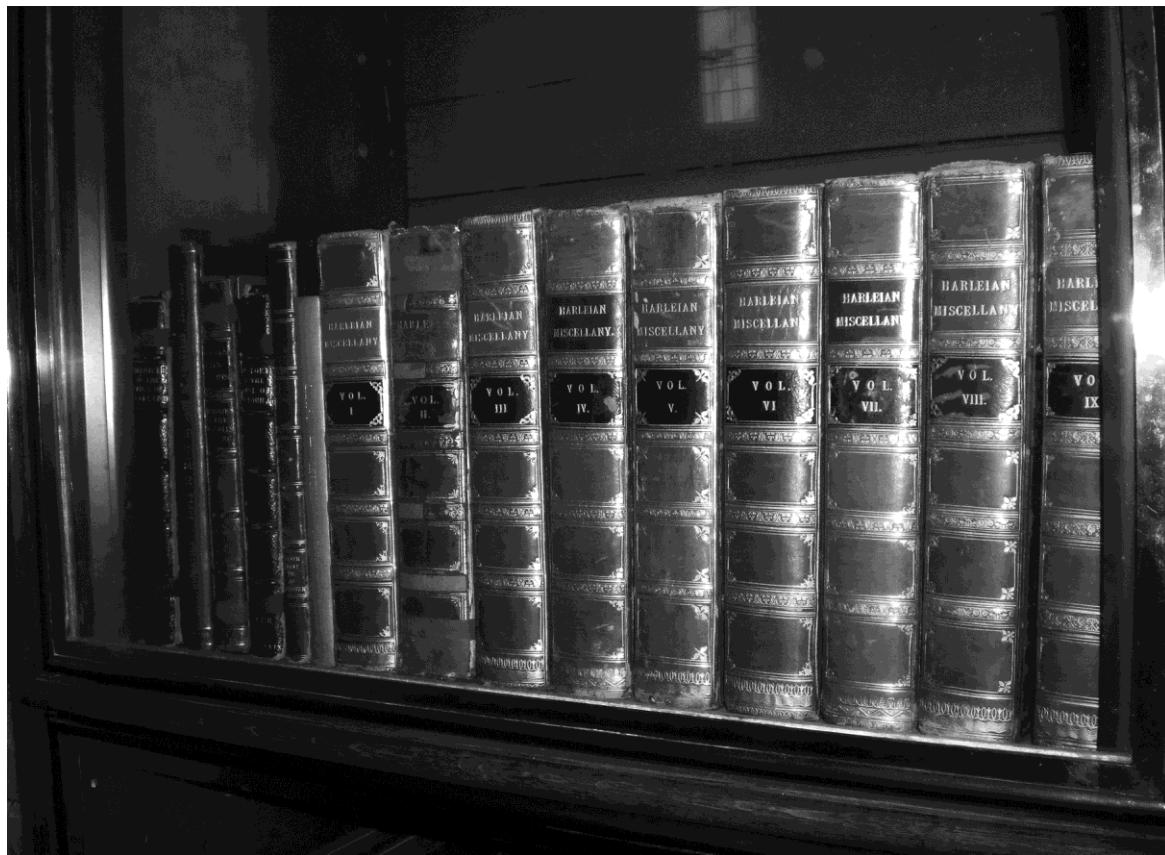


Figure 21: The Harleian Collection displayed at the British Library
©Photography E.M. Dutton

Having disposed of their originality, the next step is to examine their authenticity, and if they are real copies of veritable old documents, or mere forgeries such as Collier’s and Ireland’s, and many others who have foisted their forgeries on the literary world. It is sufficient to say, that if one manuscript proves fictitious, the whole collection must be regarded with strong suspicion. Thomas Baker was known to have been an indefatigable collector of antiquities; saturated with literary lore, especially of the Elizabethan period, and always able and willing to supply students with just such items of information as they needed. Many of his “lucky discoveries” have been embodied in standard works, and may, in these days, be capable of corroboration, but from where Thomas Baker obtained them is a mystery, as is also what

⁴³⁴ Ingram, Christopher Marlowe and his Associates (1904).

became of the results of his many years of secluded study on the wonderful works he was to produce, but which he did not finish due to his death. The manuscripts (Thomas Baker bequeathed to St. John's College) have been carefully catalogued and make a marvelous collection. Many of them are by persons as unknown to history as Chatterton's "Rowley;" several furnish particulars of celebrities nowhere else recorded, whilst others are unknown pieces by known persons. There is something strange or unique about most of them. Occasionally it is noted of a manuscript that "Baker thinks" it is in such a person's own writing. All this evidence tends to ask the question, Is the Harleian Collection a forgery? The same question could be raised for some entries in Henslowe's *Diary* where there are twenty-two admitted forgeries.

One may tend to believe these were not written by one of the Shakespearean editors, Malone, but only by Collier, since both editors were allowed the free use of the work. Dulwich College took no note of Henslowe's *Diary*, since it was kept among bundles of manuscripts, until Malone found it about 1780, where he was allowed to retain it in his possession until 1812. It is hard to believe that Collier had the unrestricted use of it in 1831, and it is known that he committed some of the forgeries within these diaries which are not all directed to Shakespearean associations, but also relate to the poet Christopher Marlowe. Probably thereby a tale hangs for Marlowevians to explore further.

III

John Payne Collier (b.1789)

Coming now to the notorious forger John Payne Collier, and we term him notorious, because this was the man who formed the Shakespeare Society in 1840. Possibly everything collected and held in that establishment can be taken with a pinch of salt.

Collier was born in London, being the son of John Dyer Collier, a prominent journalist. After a brief flirtation with the Bar, he entered the writing trade as well and began writing for "The Times" and other periodicals. He was an accomplished Parliamentary Reporter by the time he was twenty and earned enough income to feed his growing interest in books and literature. Although he continued to work as a political journalist, by his late twenties he was devoting more time to his literary interests and contributed numerous essays and poetry to literary periodicals. In 1820, Collier's book, entitled: *The Poetical Decameron, or Ten Conversations on English Poets and Poetry* was published. He became known as an authority on the history of the English stage and also began writing theatre reviews. So no later than 1828, he obtained the position of librarian to the Duke of Devonshire, who possessed one of the finest private libraries in England and it is here Collier refined his interest in the works of Shakespeare.

In 1840, Collier founded the Shakespeare Society and by 1841 his reputation as a Shakespeare scholar had risen to such heights that he was solicited to edit a new edition of the works of the Bard which was published in eight volumes from 1841 to 1843. Two years after Collier's retirement, he announced to the world that he had discovered a copy of the Second Folio of

Shakespeare's plays which contained extensive manuscript annotations and corrections in a hand seemingly contemporary with the First Folio publication. The volume became known as *The Perkins Folio* because it contained on the outer cover the inscription: "Tho. Perkins, his booke." He published his revelation in a book, entitled: "Notes and Emendations to the Text of Shakespeare's Plays: From Early Manuscript Corrections in a Copy of the Folio, 1632 in the Possession of J. Payne Collier," which came freshly from the press in 1853. He subsequently edited a new edition of Shakespeare's plays incorporating the corrections and changes he had discovered from his *Perkins Folio*. A sacrilege, to say the least.

According to Collier, his examination of *The Perkins Folio* revealed numerous manuscript notations, ranging from simple changes in punctuation, to revised stage directions and entire new lines. It was not surprising how these new findings caused a sensation in Shakespeare circles and Collier's contemporaries pleaded with him to allow a thorough examination of the volume, but he never granted anyone more than a brief look at the book. As might be expected, his claims were questioned by a number of critics, notably by Samuel W. Singer and Alexander Dyce, both of whom published critiques of Collier shortly after the publication of his *Notes and Emendations*. Though challenged, Collier was unyielding and might have remained so if not for the death of his patron, the Duke of Devonshire in 1858, for Collier had presented his discoveries to the Duke in whose library it resided, under the watchful eye of his librarian, and following the Duke's death, his heir deposited *The Perkins Folio* in the British Museum. There it was examined thoroughly by experts and in July 1859, Nicholas S.E.A. Hamilton, the Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, initially in a letter to "The Times" declared that the manuscript annotations had been written in the nineteenth century and not in the seventeenth. The implication was quite obvious: John Payne Collier had forged the emendations in *The Perkins Folio*.

Although Collier had defenders, the evidence against him continued to mount. The publication of Hamilton's *An Inquiry* (1860) summarized the analysis done at the British Museum. The final salvo came from the critic, Clement M. Ingleby, who in 1859 had accused Collier of deceit in his *Shakspeare Fabrications*. Ingleby built upon the evidence that had been collected by various critics and produced his volume *A Complete View of the Shakespere Controversy*, which came out in 1861; he also summarized all of the evidence in the case, accused Collier outright of having forged the manuscript annotations in *The Perkins Folio*, and luckily for the literary world, the accused never responded to this attack establishing his guilt. Even beyond Collier's death, when new discoveries were made, suggesting he had produced other forgeries, he remained an unfortunate figure in the history of English letters, although he produced some of the most important works of legitimate scholarship of his era. His forgeries have tainted these accomplishments permanently; his reputation has never recovered.

Ingleby tells us Collier pleaded guilty at the time "upon tampering a letter addressed to Edward Alleyn, the Elizabethan actor, by his wife, to the extent of interpolating a long passage about Shakespeare, which not only is not in the letter, which may be seen in the library of Dulwich College, but, as no entire line of it is lost, we are able to affirm it was never formed nor any part of the letter. The motive which induced Collier to commit this fraud could have

been nothing else than the *pruritus* of turning to the account of Shakespeare's life an exceedingly interesting document which contained nothing about him." Edmund Kerchever noted how "Collier seems to have freely falsified documents in the Bridgewater House, in the Dulwich College Library, even in the State Paper Office and the British Museum."⁴³⁵

Many of Collier's forgeries have been admitted unsuspectingly into literary history, and following are those works; to which it is with regret, Halliwell-Phillipps creates his *Life of William Shakespeare* (1847) based upon most of these forged works.

--1589 November: Appeal from sixteen Blackfriars players to the Privy Council for favours. Shakespeare's name stands twelfth, (manuscripts at Bridgewater House, belonging to the Earl of Ellesmere). First printed in Collier's *New Facts Regarding the Life of Shakespeare* (1835).

--1596 July: A list of inhabitants of the Liberty of Southwark; Shakespeare's name appearing in the sixth place. First printed in Collier's *Life of Shakespeare* (1858).

--1596: Petition of the owners and players of the Blackfriars theatre to the Privy Council in reply to an alleged petition of the inhabitants requesting the closing of the playhouse. Shakespeare's name is fifth on the manuscript of petitioners. This forged paper is in the Public Record Office. First printed in Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry* (1831) and has been constantly reprinted as if it were genuine.

--1596: A letter signed "H. S." (Henry, Earl of Southampton) addressed to Sir Thomas Egerton, praying protection for the players of the Blackfriars theatre, and mentioning Burbage and Shakespeare by name. Printed in Collier's *New Facts* (1835).

--1596: A list of sharers in the Blackfriars theatre with the valuation of their property, in which Shakespeare is credited with four shares, worth £933 6s. 8d. First printed in Collier's *New Facts* (1835) from Egerton's MSS., Bridgewater House.

--1602 August 6: Notice of the performance of *Othello* by Burbage's players before Queen Elizabeth when on a visit to Sir Thomas Egerton (Lord Keeper) at Harefield, in a forged account of disbursements by Egerton's steward, Arthur Mainwaringe, from the manuscripts at Bridgewater House, belonging to the Earl of Ellesmere. Printed in Collier's *New Particulars regarding the Works of Shakespeare* (1836), and again in the edition of his *Egerton Papers* (1840) by the Camden Society.

--1603 October 3: Mention of "Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe" in a letter at Dulwich from Mrs. Alleyn to her husband; part of the letter is genuine. First published in Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* (1841).⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ The History & Motives of Literary Forgeries (London: B.H. Blackwell, 1891).

⁴³⁶ Warner's Catalogue of Dulwich MSS. 24-26.

--1604 April 9: List of the names of eleven players of the King's Company fraudulently appended to a genuine letter at Dulwich College from the Privy Council bidding the Lord Mayor permit performances by the Bang's players. Printed in Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* (1841).

--1607: Notes of performances of *Hamlet* and *Richard II* by the crews of the vessels of the East India Company's fleet off Sierra Leone. First printed in *Narratives of Voyages towards the North-West, 1496–1631*, which was edited by Thomas Rundall for the Hakluyt Society in 1849; alleged to be an exact transcript in the India Office of the Journal of William Keeling, a captain of one of the vessels in the expedition. Captain Keeling's manuscript journal is still at the India Office, but the leaves that should contain these entries are now, and have long been, extracted.

--1609 January 4: A warrant appointing Robert Daborne, William Shakespeare, and other instructors of the Children of the Revels. From the Bridgewater House MSS. First printed in Collier's *New Facts* (1835).

--1609 April 6: List of persons assessed for poor rate in Southwark, April 6, 1609, in which Shakespeare's name appears. First printed in Collier's *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn* (1841).⁴³⁷ The entries in the Master of the Revels Account Books noting Court performances of the *Moor of Venice* (or *Othello*) on November 1, 1604, of *Measure for Measure* on December 26, 1604, of *The Tempest* on November 1, 1611, of *Winter's Tale* on November 5, 1611, were for a time suspected of forgery.⁴³⁸

To mention the Revel Accounts, they were originally among the papers of the Audit Office at Somerset House, where Peter Cunningham was employed as a clerk, from 1834 to 1858. In 1869 the Audit Office papers were transferred from Somerset House to the Public Record Office. But the suspected account books for 1604/5 and certain accounts for 1636/7 were retained in possession. In 1868, Cunningham offered to sell the two earlier books to the British Museum, and the latter papers to a bookseller. All were thereupon claimed by the Public Record Office, and were placed in that repository with the rest of the Audit Office Archives. Fortunately for the literary world, Cunningham's reputation was not rated high by this time. The above-mentioned documents were submitted to no careful scrutiny; Mr. E. A. (his full name has never been revealed, though I suspect him to be Nicholas S. E. A. Hamilton who was Bond Keeper of the Manuscripts in the British Museum) expressed doubt of the genuineness of the book of 1604/5, mainly owing to the spelling of Shakespeare's name as "Shaxberd;" the Deputy Keeper of the Public Record Office, Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, leaned to the same point of view. However, if one picks up a copy of *The Shakespeare Miscellany*

⁴³⁷ The forged paper is at Dulwich.

⁴³⁸ These entries were first printed by Peter Cunningham (forger himself and a friend of Collier's) in the volume *Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court* published by the Shakespeare Society (1842). The originals were at the time in Cunningham's possession, but were restored to the Public Record Office in 1868 when they were suspected of forgery. The authenticity of the documents was completely vindicated by Ernest Law in his *Some Supposed Shakespeare Forgeries* (1911) and *More about Shakespeare Forgeries* (1913). Law's conclusions were supported by Sir George Warner, Sir H. Maxwell Lyte, Dr. C. W. Wallace and Sir James Dobbie, F.R.S., Government Analyst, who analyzed the ink of the suspected handwriting.

(2005)⁴³⁹ they will find an entry of Cunningham's forgery previously mentioned, where Shakespeare's name is spelled as "Shaxberd;" the authors make no mention of this forged document, and offer this forgery (to modern readers) as factual. Cruel but true.

Shakespearean critics, who on aesthetic grounds deemed 1604 to be too early a date to which to ascribe *Othello*, were disinclined to recognize the Revels Account as genuine. On the other hand, Malone had access to the Audit Office Archives at the end of the eighteenth century, and various transcripts dating between 1571 and 1588 are printed in his *Variorum Shakespeare* that he published in 1821.⁴⁴⁰ An extract from them for the year 1604/5 is preserved among the Malone papers at the Bodleian Library (Malone 29). This memorandum agrees at all points with Cunningham's Revels Book of 1604/5. Moreover, Malone positively assigned the date 1611 to *The Tempest* in 1809 on information which he did not specify.⁴⁴¹ However, it corresponded with the suspected Revels Book of the same year, a series of papers in "The Athenæum" for 1911 and 1912 which was signed "Audi alteram partem," and vainly attempted to question Law's vindication of the documents.

To conclude, Collier, in his *History of English Dramatic Poetry* (1831); his *New Facts about Shakespeare* (1835); his *New Particulars* (1836); his *Further Particulars* (1839); and, Henslowe's *Diary* together with the *Alleyn Papers* (printed for the Shakespeare Society), while occasionally throwing some further light on obscure places, foisted on Shakespeare's biography a series of ingeniously forged documents which have greatly perplexed succeeding biographers, even to this day.

"Much notoriety," Lee writes, "was obtained by John Jordan [b.1746] a resident at Stratford, whose most important achievement was the forgery of the will of Shakespeare's father; many other papers in Jordan's *Original Collections on Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon* published in 1780, and *Original Memoirs and Historical Accounts of the Families of Shakespeare and Hart*, are open to the gravest suspicion." Jordan assumed the role of local Shakespeare historian, tour guide, and purveyor of Mulberry wood objects, carved over a period by a local by the name of Mr. Sharpe. In Jordan's historical guide trails, when there were gaps in the information, he simply made up what was missing. He took the very old tale that Shakespere, in his youth, had been caught by Lucy poaching deer, and elaborated the story into a description of the actor's wildness, "given to much drinking and womanizing." To add some zest, he identified a crab-tree near Anne Hathaway's alleged cottage as the spot where the Stratford lad and his wild young friends would have drinking parties.

For years Jordan's anecdotes and local pseudo-history found their way into biographies, and to this day, they still appear in books and articles whose authors should know better. In the "British Magazine" of June 1762, a visitor to Stratford described how, on an excursion to the neighbouring village of Bidford, the host of the local Inn, "The White Lion," showed him a crab-tree, "called Shakespeare's canopy," and repeated a myth that the poet had slept one

⁴³⁹ David Crystal and Ben Crystal, *The Shakespeare Miscellany* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 67.

⁴⁴⁰ Vol. III. 360 to 409.

⁴⁴¹ *Variorum Shakespeare*, Vol. IV. 423.

night under that tree after engaging in a strenuous drinking match with the topers of Bidford. Our Stratford guide, Jordan, who invented a variety of Shakespearean myths, penned about 1770 an elaborate narrative of this legendary exploit, and credited Shakespere on his recovery from his drunken stupor at Bidford with creating a crude rhyming catalogue of the neighbouring villages, in all of which he claimed to have proved his prowess as a toper.

The Bidford crab-tree, which the story crystallized, was sketched by the forger Samuel Ireland in 1794⁴⁴² and later, it was published as authentic by Charles F. Green in 1823.⁴⁴³ The tree was taken down in a decayed state in 1824. The shadowy legend was set out at length in Ireland's *Confessions* published in 1805, and in the *Variorum Shakespeare* of 1821. It is also the theme of the quarto volume, *Shakespeare's Crabtree and its Legend* (with nine lithographic prints), by Green, who published it in 1857. "It was Jordan who gave Ireland the first information on which he created this visionary falsehood."⁴⁴⁴

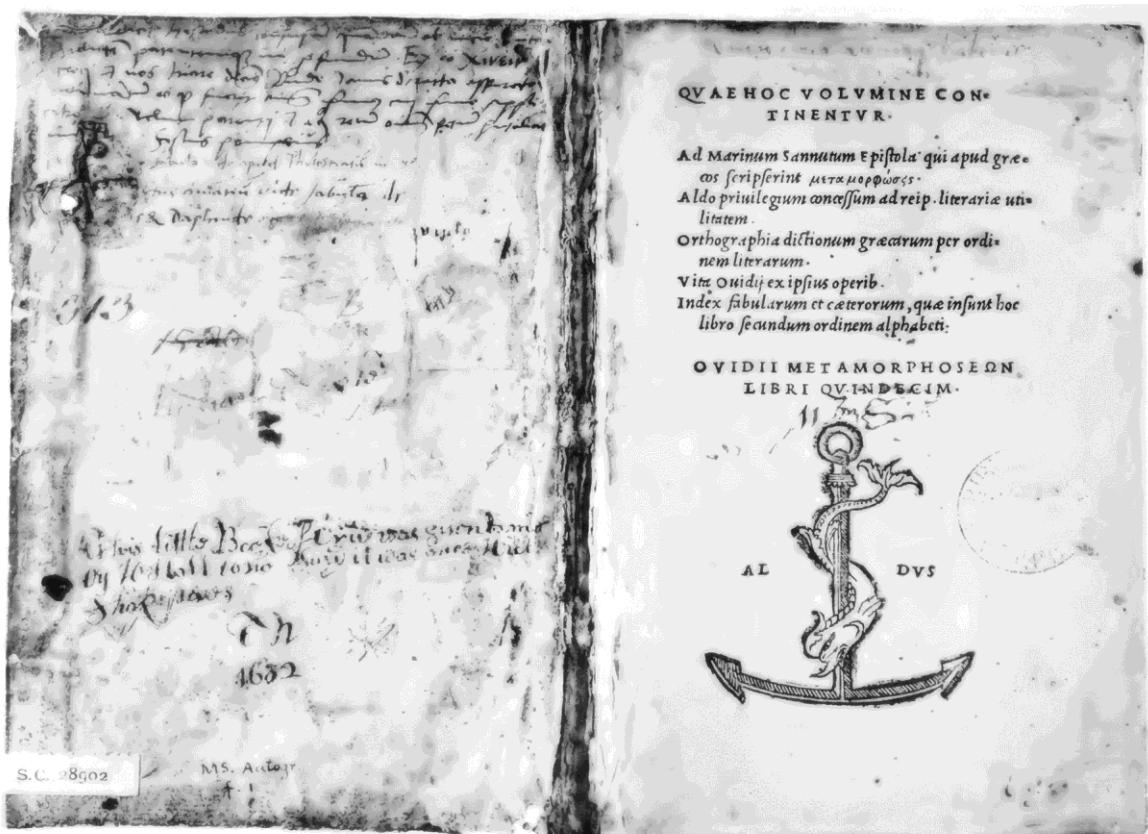


Figure 22: Alleged signature of Shakespeare on Ovid's Metamorphoses

In the Library of the Dulwich College, there contains a considerable number of manuscripts of very questionable genuineness that have been subjected to palæographical examination, and have been condemned as forgeries. Mr. Hamilton, when investigating these records, wrote:

⁴⁴² Warwickshire Avon (1795), 232.

⁴⁴³ Shakespeare's Crabtree (London: Westminster, Metchim & Burt, 1857), 9.

⁴⁴⁴ "Gentleman's Magazine" October, 1800.

“Dulwich College, however, is not without its forgeries. Of these I shall cite three examples, all of them first printed by Collier. The value of any addition, however slight, to the knowledge we possess regarding Shakespeare’s history, has alone given importance to the inquiry whether the documents from which such additional facts were taken, were genuine, as they professed to be.”⁴⁴⁵ The investigator then cites his examples which have already been given earlier under the subentry of Collier’s forgeries. It was an American professor, Charles William Wallace, who obtained such notoriety by his *New Shakespeare Discoveries*, and wrote as follows concerning Shakespere’s signatures: “One other signature deserves to be added: It is the abbreviated ‘Wm. Sh’ in a copy of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, now owned by the Bodleian Library.” On the cover page of this book, is: “This little Book of Ovid was given to me by W. Hall who said it was once Will Shakespere’s TN 1682.”

Lee, in 1916, had said of this much abbreviated signature, that “experts have declared, on grounds which deserve attention, that it is a genuine autograph of the poet.”⁴⁴⁶ A reviewer in the “Times Literary Supplement” of August 17, 1916, wrote: “As for these six tracings of Shakespeare’s pen, Sir Edward Thompson treats them with royal ceremony, analyzing them down to the last turn of the quill, and bends a divining eye upon the firmness of one stroke and shakiness of another. His inferences are ingenious; yet the quill, one feels, was not the key with which Shakespeare unlocked his heart.” Of another short signature if Shakespere’s found in the Victorian era, and proved to be a forgery, was commented on by Sir Madden: “As far as the internal evidence goes, I do not see any reasonable objection against them; but, as no facsimile has yet appeared of the original, it is impossible at present to offer any further remark. Mr. Collier urges their claim very modestly and fairly; but, as the paper may itself be a transcript of verses composed by Shakespeare, some additional evidence is required, in regard to the handwriting, &c. to enable any critic, in matters of this kind, to form an opinion. Mr. Hunter clearly proves that we should read ‘W. Sk.’ and that the author is not William Shakespeare, but Sir William Skipwith, specimens of whose verses may be found in Nichols’ *Leicestershire*.⁴⁴⁷ I have only to add, in conclusion, that the volume which belonged to Mr. Fisher, supposed to contain Shakespere’s autograph, was sold at Evans’s June 1, 1837, and as I then had an opportunity of examining it, my previous conviction of its falsity was confirmed by ocular evidence.”⁴⁴⁸

There is even a catalogue of the *Shakespeare Exhibition* held in the Bodleian Library published in 1916 (Oxford Press) where a description on Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* is interesting: “The volume here exhibited the 1502 Aldine edition of the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid in Latin, bears on the title-page, just above the well-known Aldine Anchor, what appears to be an abbreviated signature of Shakespeare as ‘W^m Sh^{re}.’ This is explained by a note on the page opposite in the following terms: ‘This little Booke of Ovid was given to me by W. Hall who sayd it was once Will. Shakesperes. T. N. 1682.’ The book was bought at a London auction in January 1864, when the stock of a bookseller named W. H. Elkin was sold. The signature is in the shaky hand of an old man, and corresponds nearly with the style of the signatures

⁴⁴⁵ An Inquiry (London: Richard Bentley, 1860).

⁴⁴⁶ Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1916), 21.

⁴⁴⁷ Vol. II, p. 367, and MS. Lansdowne, 207, f.

⁴⁴⁸ Observations on an Autograph of Shakespeare (London: Rodd, Great Newport, 1838).

appended by Shakespere to his will. If genuine, the poet must have purchased the volume after his retirement to Stratford in 1611. With respect to the note it is obvious to remark that Shakespere's daughter Susannah married a Hall, who died in 1635, and that their daughter Elizabeth married a Thomas Nash, who died in 1647. In favour of the signature are the considerations (1) that he would be an exceptionally bold forger who ventured on an abbreviated signature; a rare occurrence in Shakespeare's time, though found in such books as the University Verses of the period; (2) that the forgery (if it be one) would seem to be earlier than the golden age which began about 1760, before which scientific fraud, such as could deceive a critic of Victorian times, is hardly found; (3) that an early forger could hardly have had sight of the genuine signatures attached to the will of 1616 which alone (of the six undoubted signatures) resemble the present one. Sir Edward Maunde Thompson has decided that both the signature and the note are forgeries, but until his proofs are published it is still allowable to regard the signature as perhaps genuine." Besides the libraries of Devonshire House, Bridgewater House and the one at Dulwich College, one of the branch repositories of the Public Records and the State Paper Office was a golden well where the forgers' handiwork has been traced.

There is one document contained in a parcel marked "Bundle, No. 222, Elizabeth (1596)" which has been certified a forgery from Collier's hands.⁴⁴⁹ The following is the entire passage in which Collier states the discovery of that record in his *Annals of the Stage*:⁴⁵⁰ "The Blackfriars theatre, built in 1576, seems, after the lapse of twenty years, to have required extensive repairs, if, indeed, it were not at the end of that period entirely rebuilt. This undertaking, in 1596, seems to have alarmed some of the inhabitants of the Liberty; and not a few of them, 'some of honour,' petitioned the Privy Council, in order that the players might not be allowed to complete it, and that their further performances in that precinct might be prevented. A copy of the document containing this request, is preserved in the State Paper Office, and to it is appended a much more curious paper: A counter petition by the Lord Chamberlain's players, entreating that they might be permitted to continue their work upon the theatre, in order to render it more commodious, and that their performances there might not be interrupted. It does not appear to be the original, but a copy without the signatures and it contains at the commencement, an enumeration of the principal actors who were parties to it. They occur in the following order, and it will be instantly remarked, not only that the name of Shakespeare is found among them, but that he comes fifth in the enumeration: Thomas Pope, Richard Burbage, John Hemings, Augustine Phillips, William Shakespeare, William Kempe, William Slye, Nicholas Tooley. This remarkable paper has, perhaps, never seen the light from the moment it was presented, until it was very recently discovered. It is seven years anterior to the date of any other authentic record, which contains the name of our great dramatist, and it may warrant various conjectures as to the rank he held in the Company in 1596, as a poet and as a player." Hamilton endeavoured but unsuccessfully tried to see this petition of the inhabitants mentioned at the commencement of Collier's statement. In reply to an official request for the production of the document, Charles Lechmere, Assistant Keeper of State Papers, wrote: "I have referred to the Calendar of 1596, but I do not find any entry of the

⁴⁴⁹ Hamilton N.E.S.A, An Inquiry (London: Richard Bentley, 1860).

⁴⁵⁰ Vol. I. 207.

petition from the inhabitants of the Blackfriars. Of these two documents, one is an undoubted forgery; the very existence of the other seems problematical.” Hamilton was adamant that all documents preserved at the time in the Public Records and the State Paper Office would need to be treated as forgeries and condemned: “Before a new edition of Shakespeare is issued, or a new life written, it will be necessary that the whole of the hitherto supposed basis of the poet’s history should be rigorously examined, and no effort spared to discover the perpetrator of that treason against the Majesty of English literature, which it has been my object to denounce.”⁴⁵¹

Considerable difficulty has been caused to historians of literature by what may be called the Shakespeare-apocrypha, that are works of dubious authenticity, a term usually associated with certain biblical texts but also useful in literary scholarship. The mere fact that a play is entered as Shakespeare’s in the Stationers’ Register, or that it bears his name or initials upon the front page, is by no means sufficient evidence that it is in any reasonable sense his work. It was by no means every dramatist whose effusions would pay for the printing, and Elizabethan publishers were not above making use of Shakespeare’s acknowledged reputation to “imp out” that of meaner men. For a period of nearly eighty years, up to as late as 1660, we constantly find plays ascribed to the master-dramatist which he cannot possibly have written. Forgers existed, exist, prosper, and create their notoriety beyond death. Why were they not detected sooner, one may ask, since nothing could be more natural than for a modern European to think that the right Latin for “good deeds” was to translate it as *bona facta*; however, an ancient roman would have written *bene facta*. Men were giants of intellect in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, yet these forgers galvanized throughout literary libraries, helping themselves upon manuscripts, and bastardsizing them to no disgrace.



Figure 23: The Irelands

⁴⁵¹ An Inquiry (London: Richard Bentley, 1860).

This section of forgers, though not complete, takes to a youngster, a boy of nineteen, who pulled off the greatest Shakespearean forgery of his times to win the respect of his father (Samuel) who died in 1800. Samuel Ireland was originally a Spitalfields silk weaver, but having a natural taste for the fine arts, went into that trade and embarked in business as a book-dealer and publisher, himself writing several of the illustrated itineraries he issued. He took a prominent part in the gross forgeries of his son (William-Henry) and though acquitted of willful participation by the chief criminal it is difficult to believe him entirely free of blame. His son was the first “Master” of Shakespearean forgers, whose works appeared during the years of 1794 up to 1796. “The Ireland forgeries deceived experts for years,” Manly P. Hall had noted. Young Ireland “began the fabrication in the belief that by an innocent delusion” he “could please one whom” he “was anxious to gratify.” This was no other but his father, “and the persuasion” which he believed to “be allowed not unnatural to a youth, that if the deception were even exposed, the boldness of the attempt would have gained” him “praise for” his ingenuity rather than censure for his deceit.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵² William-Henry Ireland, *Confessions* (1805).

Chapter Six

Palace of Myths

“Liars, damned liars, and expert witnesses.”
—*A Judge (1800)*⁴⁵³

“A singular and unaccountable mystery,” says Rees, “is attached to Shakespeare’s private life; and, by some strange fatality, almost every document concerning him has either been destroyed or still remains in obscurity.”⁴⁵⁴ Yet notwithstanding all this mystery, and the absence of any positive information, learned and voluminous commentators and biographers, in great numbers, have been led to suppose and assert a thousand things in regard to Shakespeare’s history, pursuits and attainments, which cannot be substantiated by a particle of proof. The conjectures entered in this chapter are usually termed, by biographers, as “traditions,” “fables,” and “anecdotes” but never as what they really are: Just pure fantasies of the human imagination to fill up the genealogy of a Stratfordian actor who could not fit into the shoes of the Immortal Bard.

Probably two eminent and histrionic authors have been misunderstood by contemporary scholars (to extremes) regarding their writings. One would be Robert Greene (1560–1592). This writer published his most celebrated work in 1592, entitled: *Greene’s Groatsworth of Witte, Purchased with a Million of Repentance*;⁴⁵⁵ the work gives a lurid description of the dissolute life he led and those companions with whom he “consumed the flower of his youth.” It is only upon the authority of Greene’s “Shake-scene” passage in his work, that critics place the Stratford actor in London by 1592, and already in theatrical business. But as a matter of fact, Greene never named Shakespeare or any of his plays. Nevertheless the Stratfordians are leading the reader to believe that Greene, in authenticated record, makes mention of Shakespeare; this it seems is setting a high value on mere guess-work due to the fact, that at the time Greene wrote his celebrated letter, the Shakespearean plays were anonymous, not one of certified authorship, and no poem was published under the name of Shakespeare or under any similar name till 1593; no play till 1598; no edition of the sonnets till 1609.⁴⁵⁶

Professor Churton Collins had said, regarding Robert Greene’s “Shake-scene,” that “it is at least doubtful whether this supposed allusion to Shakespeare has any reference to him at all.” And E. K. Chambers, a scholar of the English stage, admits in his *Elizabethan Stage* (1923), that on no list of players, or any document that has come through his hands, is there the slightest evidence for Shakespeare’s presence anywhere in the London theater community before March 15, 1595; significant since he shows of the leading actors of this period were mentioned in contemporary records. Malone’s theory is how Shakespere did not arrive in

⁴⁵³ Attributed to a certain judge of the mid-Victorian period.

⁴⁵⁴ Cyclopedie “Shakespeare” (London: 1816).

⁴⁵⁵ A copy belonging to a Mr. Bindley (late eighteenth century) fetched the price of £6. 16s. 6d. and another copy sold at the Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica, for £7. 7s., which was “elegantly bound in morocco.”

⁴⁵⁶ Chapman, *Shakespeare: The Personal Phase* (California: Giles Publishing, 1920).

London before September 1592; and “at what time so ever he became acquainted with the theatre, we may presume that he had not composed his first play long before it was acted.”⁴⁵⁷

There is a good article on the subject written by Stephanie Hopkins Hughes, from 1995 for the Shakespeare Oxford Society Conference in Greensboro, NC, but not given until the Seattle conference in 1997. Her explanations of the “Shake-scene” found in Greene’s work, can be directed to meaning a “heavy walk” of the famous actor Edward Alleyn, since it has been noted how his strong stride would sometimes splinter the stage floor boards. She also gives notice to William Kempe’s *Nine Days Wonder* (published in 1600) where Kempe makes reference to the “impudent generation of Ballad-makers” then being the proto-journalists, as “notable Shakerags.” In the same work of Kempe’s, there is another mention of a piece anterior to Shakespeare’s tragedy *Macbeth*: “Still the search continuing, I met a proper upright youth, only for a little stooping in the shoulders, all heart to the heel, a penny poet, whose first making [poetical composition] was the miserable stolen story of Macdoel, or Macdobeth, or Macsomewhat, for I am sure a Mac it was, though I never had the maw to see it; and he told me there was a fat filthy ballet-maker, that should have once been his journeyman to the trade, who lived about the town, and ten to one but he had thus terribly abused me and my taberer, for that he was able to do such a thing in print.”⁴⁵⁸

Dr. Grosart tells us “Greene was married is certain, Dyce thinks in 1586, and it is as certain, that although on his own authority his wife was a most amiable and loving woman, he ere long forsook her to indulge without restraint his passion for debauchery and every species of self-indulgence. After leaving his wife, he lived with a woman, the sister of an infamous character, well known then under the name of Cutting Ball, and by her he had a son who died in the year after his father.”⁴⁵⁹

The “infamous character” mentioned by Grosart (Cutting Ball) was a notorious criminal during the Elizabethan Age. His name came from a thief, or cutpurse as they were called, who Thomas Nashe mentions a ballad written about him, which no longer survives. Cutting Ball’s sister, was Em and this is the woman Grosart terms as Robert Greene’s mistress. Greene had hired Cutting Ball as a bodyguard, and I could not discover anything further, except that he was hanged at Tyburn at a date unknown.

After leading one of the maddest lives on record, Robert Greene died on September 3, his last illness being caused by a “debauch.” On his death-bed he was deserted by all his companions except his mistress, and was indebted to the wife of a poor shoemaker for the last bed on which he laid.

The other misunderstood author would be Francis Meres, an author and commentator on the London literary scene; primarily a rural minister and schoolmaster. He was the brother-in-law of John Florio (tutor of the Earl of Southampton); friend and protégé of Burghley. His famous

⁴⁵⁷ Prolegomena (London: John Cawthorn, 1804), Vol. II.

⁴⁵⁸ William Kemp, Kempe’s Nine Daies Wonder (1600).

⁴⁵⁹ The Life and Complete Works of Robert Greene (London: 1887).

work was published in 1598 (*Palladis Tamia: Wits Treasury*) giving public notice of a number of plays that had long been played and acted anonymously being the work of a man named William Shakespeare. The obligation of Francis Meres, when compiling a comparative discourse of the English poets, with the Greek, Latin, and Italian poets, stated: “I have had occasion to notice in another place J. Cambro-Vaughan, and also Henry Peacham, derived their information from the same unacknowledged authority.”⁴⁶⁰ From such compilations written in 1598, Meres published his *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury* which was the second part of *Wits Commonwealth* that saw the light in 1598, and again in 1634, to which an engraved title was added as *Witts Academy, a Treasury of Golden Sentences, &c.* In the year 1637, appeared *Politeuphia, or Wits Commonwealth*, which was compiled by John Bodenham, and probably because of its wide acceptance, Bodenham suggested the attempt for making the *Palladis Tamia* into a second part. However, these works are never found together.

I Shakespere's Coat-of-Arms

There is a Shakespere motto, *Non sans droyt* (Not without right) which may seem to have been formed on the motto of the family of Staunton that appeared on a monument in the church of St. Michael at Coventry: *Rien Saunce Travayle*. Judith, the wife of Hamlet Sadler, the friend of the Stratford actor Shakespere, was by birth a Staunton. We add below from the *Herald and Genealogist* the text regarding the first grant for a Coat-of-Arms from John Shakespere in 1596. This document is in two draft copies preserved in the College of Arms, in manuscript.⁴⁶¹ On the manuscript of Art. 24 appears to be a second copy, but as there is a pause in the middle where the paper is torn away, Halliwell-Phillipps had taken the former for the text of his copy, inserting the variations of Art. 24.⁴⁶²

First Grant of Coat-of-Arms
John Shakespere (1596)
Harleian Manuscript 6140. f.45⁴⁶³

To all and singular Noble and Gentlemen of what estate (or) degree bearing Arms to whom these present shall come, William Dethick *alias* Garter Principal King of Arms send thee greetings. Know ye that, whereas by the authority and ancient privileges pertaining to my office from the Queen's most excellent Majesty and by her Highness most noble and victorious progenitors, I am to take general notice and record and to make declaration and testimony for all causes of Arms and matters of gentry through all her Majesty's Kingdoms, dominions, principalities, isles, and provinces, to the end that, as many gentlemen by their ancient names of families, kindred, and descents, have and enjoy certain ensigns and Coats-of-Arms, so it is very expedient in all ages that some men for their valiant facts, magnanimities, virtue, dignity, and deserts, may use and bear such tokens of honour and worthiness whereby their name and

⁴⁶⁰ *Palladia Tamia. Wits Treasury* (Sfc. 1598, 1634. 12mo).

⁴⁶¹ Vincent 157, Art. 23, and Art. 24.

⁴⁶² *Curiosities of Modern Shakespearian Criticism* (London: John Russell Smith, 1853), 69.

⁴⁶³ F. Kittermaster, *Warwickshire Arms and Lineages* (London: William Macintosh, Paternoster Row, 1866).

good fame may be the better known and divulged, and their children and posterity in all virtue (to the service of their Prince and country) encouraged.

Wherefore being solicited and by credible report informed that John Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick whose parents and late antecessors [grandfather⁴⁶⁴] were for their faithful and valiant service advanced and rewarded by the most prudent Prince King Henry the seventh of (famous memory, since which time they have continued at) those parts, being of good reputation (and credit, and that the) said John hath married (Mary, daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden of Wilmcote in the said) county esquire. In consideration whereof and for the encouragement of his posterity, to whom such blazon (or achievement) by the ancient custom of the laws of Arms may descend, I the said Garter King of Arms have assigned granted and by these presents confirmed this shield or Coat-of-Arms, *viz.*

Shakespear. Or., [gold or yellow] on a bend, [diagonal band] fa., [sable or black] a spear of the field. Crest: An eagle rising, arg., [silver or white] holding a spear, or. [gold or yellow] Granted by Sir William Dethick, Garter, to William Shakespear.

*

There is as yet no unanimous opinion among Shakespeareans as to whether a Coat-of-Arms had or had not been granted to John Shakespere, and if made, when such a grant had been made. Halliwell-Phillipps, Kenny, Carew Hazlitt and the scholar Fleay, were of the opinion that neither of the proposed grants was ratified. Malone, Knight, Dyce, Hudson, Bohn and Nichols claimed that both applications had been crowned with success. Joseph Hunter, White, Elze, Lee and Mabie assert that only the 1599 application was duly executed. Tudor Jenks, whose main interest in the Coat-of-Arms is its decorative use in editions of his works, stated the application for armorial bearings was not granted until 1599 “and then with an omission of the Arden Arms.” Dowden, in his *Primer*, asserts that an application was granted in 1597, and W. J. Rolfe was of the opinion that “neither of the drafts made in 1596 was duly executed, and the application in 1599 was granted as to the Shakspeare Arms and as to some Arden Arms but not those asked for.”⁴⁶⁵

Stopes thought the 1596 application was successful, but she was in doubt whether the grant of the Arden Arms was ever completed.⁴⁶⁶ Lambert witnessed “the application exists in the form of two drafts at the Heralds’ College made out by Dethick and was followed in 1599 by a draft of a confirmation of the grant in somewhat similar terms allowing the Shakesperes to impale their Arms with those of Arden.” He then offers his own opinion how “there is no evidence, but very strong presumption, that the Arms were actually granted; for the Shakespere family

⁴⁶⁴ Richard Shakespere (or Shakstaff) who died in 1560; his relation with the Stratfordian actor is only placed upon conjecture: “He was in all probability Shakespeare’s grandfather,” says Halliwell-Phillipps. (*A Life of William Shakespeare* (London: John Russell Smith, 1847). Richard was “a farmer who lived within easy walking distance of Stratford.” (Hamilton W. Mabie, *William Shakespeare: Poet, Dramatist, & Man* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1912), 28). In October 1535, he was charged and fined for keeping cattle on the common pastures.

⁴⁶⁵ A *Life of William Shakespeare* (1904), 287-292.

⁴⁶⁶ *Shakespeare’s Family* (London: Elliot Stock, 1901), 22-32.

adopted the Arms for which John Shakespere had applied. Halliwell-Phillipps is of opinion (a probable conjecture) that the application to the Heralds' College was made at the instance of the poet, as it is not likely that John Shakespere in his then circumstances would have made such a move only a few years before his death.”⁴⁶⁷

Samuel Tannenbaum offers a theory in his work, *Was William Shakespeare a Gentleman?* (1909) “The fact that no fully executed, engrossed and sealed patent of Arms to John Shakespere has been discovered is generally construed as proof positive that neither application was ratified by the Heralds. But this absence of a completed patent does not prove that none was issued. Considering the many fatalities that have occurred to blot out evidence relating to the poet, such as the total destruction by fire of the Globe theater in 1613; two great fires in Stratford subsequent to 1596; the great fire of London in 1666;⁴⁶⁸ the rebuilding and subsequent demolition of “New Place” the poet’s Stratford residence; the devastating influence of time; the ravages of enthusiastic and relic hunters, the loss of this document seems a very natural and not unexpected occurrence. The completed patent was the property of the successful candidate for Heraldic distinction, and it was therefore much more likely to succumb to one of the various agencies just enumerated than the draft preserved by the College authorities for purposes of record. Tradition records that the poet’s only granddaughter, Lady Barnard (d.1670) the last one of Shakespeare’s family to occupy “New Place” carried with her to Abington (her second husband’s residence) many of the poet’s private papers.”⁴⁶⁹

II

The Influence of Commercialism

John Manningham was a barrister-at-law of the Middle Temple. His diary was published by the Camden Society in 1868 by John Bruce. The diary holds an entry of interest, dated March 13, 1601:

Upon a time when Burbage played Richard the third there was a citizen gone so far in liking with him, that before she went from the play she appointed him to come that night unto her by the name of Richard the third. Shakespeare, overhearing their conclusion, went before, was entertained, and at his game ere Burbage came. Then message being brought that Richard the third was at the door, Shakespeare caused return to be made that William the Conqueror was before Richard the third. Shakespeare’s name William. (*Mr. Touse?*).

What is striking from this entry is that the writer finds it necessary to emphasize or give reference to the first name “Shakespeare’s name William.” Either Shakespeare, in 1601, was

⁴⁶⁷ Shakespeare Documents (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904).

⁴⁶⁸ Charles Severn, Diary of the Rev. John Ward (London: Henry Colburn, 1839): “The great fire in 1666 began in Pudding Lane, in one Mr. Farmer’s house, a baker.”

⁴⁶⁹ The houses in Henley Street passed at her death then to the grandson of Shakespeare’s sister (Joan) and remained in the family until the eighteenth century.

unknown, or Manningham did not know who Shakespeare was; or the alleged teller of this tale (Mr. Touse?) did not know Shakespeare. Another striking and worrisome fact is how Collier was the first to take notice of these diary entries, after quoting various entries into his *Annals of the Stage*, published in 1831. It is worthy to notice how the “collator has been baffled,” by the handwriting in the diary; the collator then being John Bruce.⁴⁷⁰ Whatever was handled by Collier, afterward put back onto its shelf, will need to be looked on with some reservation.

But to show how the moral character of Stratfordian faith had degenerated under the influence of peculiar commercialism ever since the first Jubilee in 1748, we have only to turn our attention to an American book written by William J. Rolfe, published in 1905, that was entitled *A Life of William Shakespeare*. A portrait of the supposed Shakespeare in youth is presented on the frontispiece of that work. The portrait of course depicts John Milton and not Shakespeare. The deception is particularly heinous, because, as the author William Edwards confesses, the book was written for the benefit of young people.⁴⁷¹ In the list of illustrations, Rolfe entitles the portrait: “Shakespeare at the age of twelve.” No portrait of Shakespeare’s is in existence, or ever was in existence. It was later proved an utter blunder on Rolfe’s part.

Another blunder was invented with Shakespere’s alleged Seal Ring. It is said to have been found in 1810 in a field near Stratford churchyard by a labourer’s wife, who, before selling it, immersed it in a bath of *aquafortis* (acid) “to remove the stains of age;” the ring was gold, and had the initials “W.S.” Malone suggested the ring might have belonged to a William Smith, an old resident of Stratford. There is also a brooch allegedly belonging to Shakespeare, which has a short history with unjust sadness.

In the year 1827, a portion of the garden land of “New Place” adjoining Chapel-lane was sold. The next year (1828) in the course of some excavations, a brooch was thrown out into the dustbin. It was found by a labouring man called Joseph Smith who was engaged in the excavations and demolishing. He was said to have traded in minerals, yet his daughter, Mrs. Pittaway, a resident of that town, tells that her father “did odd jobs” around the area. When Smith found the brooch he did not think much of it, and gave it to his children to play with. The brooch was covered with dirt and corrosion, but the friction from handling it soon removed all that, and enabled the precious stones to become clear. The discoverer scraped it clean and then found the letters “w Shakespeare” inscribed on it. There was also another word before the “w” which could not be made out.

Being poor, Smith thought it a good idea to exhibit the brooch in a window display with the following advertisement: “To be seen here Shakespere’s Brooch. The last relic found upon the spot by Joseph Smith, Cooper, of Stratford, when part of the house called ‘New Place’ situated in Chapel Street was pulled down, which house Shakspere built, and in which he lived and died, this relic was discovered among the rubbish in the year 1828, and from the death of Shakspere it must have been lost 212 years.”

⁴⁷⁰ Diary of John Manningham No. 5353 in the Harleian collection of MSS. in the British Museum. (London: Camden Society, republished in 1868).

⁴⁷¹ Shakespere not Shakespeare (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Co., 1900), 28.

Below this advertisement (in pencil): "I believe the brooch presented to be a relic of the immortal Shakespere. Signed: George Jackson, Antiquarian." And below this (in pencil): "So do I, Samuel Bayley, Artist." And below that (in pencil): "This brooch bears every appearance of having belonged to Shakespere, and the writing in my opinion confirms it. Signed: Brook, Sunday Chronicle Office, 18, Pickett-street, London." And below these signatures was the signature of W. S. Cox, Birm., and the letters "Dr.," evidently intended to make plain that William Sands Cox, F. R. S., the eminent surgeon of Birmingham, had thought fit to inscribe his name on the advertisement, and give his testimony to the genuineness of the brooch. How he managed to deduce this, is beyond medical comprehension.

Since the finding of the brooch made some considerable sensation in the town, Captain James Saunders,⁴⁷² the well-known antiquarian, was very anxious to possess the item. He offered £7 for the brooch, to be put in his collection of "relics." Joseph Smith refused to sell, and well done for him, since he was told that the brooch was worth much more. Besides, Smith was occasionally making money by showing off the item to the curious and you do not let the golden goose fly off, even if it lays copper eggs from time to time.

Captain Saunders contributed a short notice of the finding of the brooch to the newspaper of the time "The Mirror" in its edition of September 26, 1829, under the pseudonym HJTHWC, briefly stating: "This brooch is considered by the most competent judges and antiquaries, in and near Stratford, to have been the personal property of Shakespere."

In the meantime, poor Joseph Smith became poorer; a family of ten children must have had something to do with it. So, he left town to seek work elsewhere. When he returned, he was brought to the Magistrates for deserting his wife and children, and was sent to the gaol. One of the Magistrates, Mr. Geatley, is allegedly to have said that as Smith had been obstinate in not giving up the brooch, they would be obstinate too, and, if they could, they would certainly send him to the Warwick gaol for twelve months. They did, but only for three months. Smith stated that he firmly believed the offence of having left his family would have been overlooked if he had given up the brooch, and during the time he was in prison, the brooch was left in the care of a William H. Harborne, citizen of that town. Out of some peculiar and undisclosed nature, the brooch later came into the possession of Joseph Harborne, son of William Harborne. Unfortunately, the "relic" broke, and according to the son, he well remembered how the brooch found its demise: When shown at his father's house in Henley Street, "on one occasion a lady, an actress, called to see it, and pressing it enthusiastically to her bosom, exclaiming 'Oh, my Shakespeare!' she broke the brooch into two pieces."⁴⁷³

Joseph Smith died at the age of eighty-nine on September 8, 1880. He made a statutory declaration of the circumstances of the brooch in 1864, when the Harborne's took full possession and ownership. He had stated that he considered the "relic" worth £1,000 and went to prison for three months rather than relinquish possession of it, "till poverty and not

⁴⁷² Captain Saunders, to whom the Shakespeare Museum is largely indebted for many manuscripts and drawings illustrative of its history known as "The Saunders Collection," was also the buyer of the alleged Shakespere baptismal font.

⁴⁷³ Henry W. Sage, *The History of Shakespeare's Brooch* (Stratford-on-Avon: Edward Fox, 1883).

his will, compelled.” The brooch has been kept (to this day) from public view since it was broken against the bosom of the actress.

Another fraudulent story, coming from Mr. Ryan’s edition of 1825,⁴⁷⁴ is of Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare. The anecdote, a mere late eighteenth-century invention, related to Elizabeth being at a theatre one evening while Shakespeare was playing a king, and bowing to him as she crossed the stage. He disregarded her and went on with his part without returning the salutation. The Queen again passed him, and to directly attract his attention dropped her glove; the poet at once picked it up, and continuing the delivery of his speech, added these lines: “And though now bent on this high embassy, yet stoop we to take up our cousin’s glove.” The Queen, we are told, was greatly pleased. The myth is obviously absurd and incredible. Elizabeth did not visit the public theatres, and the custom was to sit removed from the stage at both private and also at Court performances; as much as she may have estimated plays and players, she would not have forgotten her Queenly state and dignity.⁴⁷⁵

The author, Charles Severn, in 1839, gathered a collection of manuscripts from the personal diary of the Rev. John Ward (1629–1681) who was vicar of Stratford, extending from 1662 to 1681. Severn, in his Preface writes: “In the absence of all documents of a date so near the time of Shakespere as those of the vicar, his diary must be deemed the most credible authority yet published, as it is the only record extant of the income enjoyed by the poet while living, and of the illness which terminated his existence.”⁴⁷⁶

Rev. John Ward was educated at Oxford where he associated with the resident practitioners, and by 1661, he was residing in London. There, he began to associate with apothecaries and chemists, investigating their processes of modes in preparing medicines, which he recorded in detail. By 1662, we hear Ward being in Stratford and already being appointed the vicarage by King Charles II. Ward died at the age of fifty-two, on September 7. Here is an extract of interest from his diary: “Shakespere, Drayton and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespere died of a fever there contracted.” We could find no evidence that corroborates this tale, neither could we discover Ben Jonson and Drayton were even in Stratford in 1616. Severn said that “Dr. John Hall undoubtedly attended Shakespere’s last illness, being himself then forty years of age, but, unluckily, the earliest entry in his notes is 1617.” And Charles Isaac Elton wrote in 1904 that Ward noted “low typhoid fever” as the cause, and that Severn in his edition of the vicar’s diary entries, states it was that “which clings to the sickening heart, and fastens on the pallid brow for days and weeks, and sometimes for months together.”⁴⁷⁷ However, after personally reading Ward’s diary entry, it does not elaborate any further than how all three men got drunk and how the alleged Bard died of “a fever.”

Karl Philipp Moritz (1757–1793) was a Prussian clergyman travelling on a modest budget whilst visiting England in 1782. His account of his journey is written in a series of letters to a

⁴⁷⁴ Vol. II. 156.

⁴⁷⁵ Brown Henry, *Shakespeare’s Patrons* (1912).

⁴⁷⁶ Diary of the Rev. John Ward (London: Henry Colburn, 1839).

⁴⁷⁷ William Shakespeare, *his Family & Friends*. (New York: E. P. Dutton Publishing, 1904).

friend, and was translated from German and published in 1795. The first half of his account describes his stay in London, including hearing speeches by famous politicians. He then travelled on foot through Richmond, Windsor, Oxford and Birmingham to the Peak District, returning to London by coach. Of his visit to Stratford, on June 30, 1782, here is what he wrote:

Just as we had been sometime eagerly conversing about Shakespere, we arrived, without either of us having thought of it, at Stratford, Shakespere's birthplace, where our coach stopped, that being the end of one stage. We were still two-and-twenty miles from Birmingham, and ninety-four from London. I need not tell you what our feelings were, on thus setting our feet on classic ground. We went to see Shakespere's own house, which, of all the houses at Stratford I think is now the worst, and one that made the least appearance. Yet, who would not be proud to be the owner of it? There now however lived in it only two old people, who show it to strangers for a trifle, and what little they earn thus is their chief income. Shakespere's chair, in which he used to sit before the door, was so cut to pieces that it hardly looked like a chair; for everyone that travels through Stratford cuts off a chip as a remembrance, which he carefully preserves, and deems a precious relic, I also cut myself a piece of it, but reverencing Shakespere as I do, I am almost ashamed to own to you it was so small that I have lost it, and therefore you will not see it on my return.

⁴⁷⁸

Upon our visit to Stratford in 2006, a striking advertisement was found with other advertisements at the rebuilt Globe theatre. The advert depicted some English manufacturer, (names are not necessary to be given) who would create a limited edition of the “William Shakespeare Chair” for the astounding amount of “£5,995 and a £1,500 initial payment is required in £sterling with each chair ordered.” All major credit cards accepted.

A mythical story of Stratford has it, that Shakespere planted a Mulberry sapling at “New Place” with his own hands. No written or printed record of Shakespere’s Mulberry-tree has been discovered, but there is the story, resting on the testimony of a very old man, that Hugh Clopton entertained friends under the tree about the year 1744. The tree was cut down in the year 1758, and within a few months, tobacco-stoppers made of its wood various Shakespearean “relics” as did a Mr. Moody, who was a toy seller in Birmingham.⁴⁷⁹ There can be no doubt that very soon after the tree was felled, it was known as “Shakespeare’s Mulberry-tree” and various creations were made from it and exposed for sale.

We also find the histrionic Mulberry-tree printed on a Second Folio of Shakespeare’s works; it was to be sold on July 16, 1912, at the John Edward Taylor Collection of Engravings and Books.⁴⁸⁰ I was unable to find a later record of the sale and how much the book sold for.

⁴⁷⁸ Karl Moritz, *Travels in England in 1782* (London: Cassell & Company, 1886).

⁴⁷⁹ Hull’s Select Letters (1778).

⁴⁸⁰ Henry Beaufoy, *First Four Folio Editions of Shakespeare* (1912).

Another “tradition” sprang up at Wilton at the end of the last century to the effect that a letter once existed there in which the Countess of Pembroke bade her son the Earl while he was in attendance on James I at Salisbury to bring the King to Wilton to witness a performance of *As You Like It*. The Countess is said to have added, “we have the man Shakespere with us.” No tangible evidence of the existence of the letter is forthcoming, “and its tenor stamps it,” says Lee, “if it exists, as an ignorant invention.”

And we may end this section with another American point of view, that strongly agrees with our views: “That such a man as Shakespere, who helped to steal sheep, and lay intoxicated with his companions under a Crab-tree near Stratford, and performed other very ordinary achievements, that such a man may have lived we do not pretend to deny. Our business is to prove that such a great writer, dramatist, universal genius, poet, and doctor of human nature, as Shakespeare is supposed to have been, did not exist.” As to the various trades attributed to the actor, they are many, and are given in the next section that I deal with. I must stress to the reader, that I am undoubtedly satisfied that there was a William Shakespeare who was the author of plays, poems, and sonnets. Our disbelief is that the Stratfordian actor, Shakespere, can be the same character. With this in mind, all following professions are stressed for the author and not the actor.

III Shakespere's Professions

(ACTOR) The Burbages (James and Cuthbert) were theatre managers; there has been “no record found if Shakespeare ever received payments from the Burbages,” Said Brown.⁴⁸¹ However, Robert Frazer shows “the first official mention of Shakespere as an actor is in the list of some of the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, who gave two comedies at Greenwich Palace, at Christmas, 1594. The entry states that William Kempe, William Shakespeare and Richard Burbage were paid £20 for their performances at that time.”⁴⁸²

Robert Shiels, in *Gibber's Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1753) relates “a story which Sir William D’Avenant told Betterton, who communicated it to Rowe; Rowe told it Pope, and Pope told it to Dr. Newton, the late editor of Milton, and from a gentleman who heard it from him, ‘tis here related, concerning Shakespere’s first appearance in the playhouse.” Shiels was Dr. Samuel Johnson’s amanuensis, and the tale was also published in the latter’s *Prolegomena*: “In the time of Elizabeth, coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play, and when Shakespere fled to London, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man called for Shakespere, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a

⁴⁸¹ Law Sport’s at Gray’s Inn (1594) (New York: 1921).

⁴⁸² The Silent Shakespeare (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915).

horse while he could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune, and higher employment.”

Another myth relates Shakespere in an early employment in the theatre, recorded by Malone: “There is a stage tradition, that his first office in the theatre was that of callboy (or prompter’s attendant) whose employment it is to give the performers notice to be ready to enter, as often as the business of the play requires their appearance on the stage.”⁴⁸³

(BOTANIST) Mr. G. Farren’s 1829 *Observations on the Laws of Mortality and Disease* notices Shakespeare’s exquisite taste and botanical knowledge in his treatment of flowers; C. A. Brown concurred. Mr. Harting’s 1871 *Ornithology of Shakespeare* expresses Shakespeare was a sportsman and a naturalist, and Mr. J. H. Fennell, in his proposed work in twenty parts on Shakespeare’s knowledge in all branches of natural history, stopped in 1862 with Part I: *Zoology. Man* of his work, entitled: *Shakespeare Cyclopædia*.

(MEDICINE MAN) “He was a surgeon, and had a minute knowledge of anatomy,” said Wadd.⁴⁸⁴ The German critic Schlegel arrived at very similar conclusions: “Of all the poets, Shakespeare alone has portrayed the mental diseases, melancholy, delirium, and lunacy, with such inexpressible and in every respect definite truth, that the physician may enrich his observations from them in the same manner as from real cases.”

(PRINTER) The most intriguing, and most interesting occupation found bestowed upon the Stratfordian actor, and not the author, is in William Blades’s 1897 *Shakespere & Typography*. He offers his own theory of what the actor did when he arrived in London, allegedly around 1589 to escape his alleged marriage. “It is usually supposed that immediately upon his arrival in London he became in some way associated with the stage, but there is no evidence of this. On the contrary, coming to London poor, needy, and in search of employment, he was immediately taken into the service of Vautrollier the printer.”⁴⁸⁵ William Blades should have added that there is no evidence of this either; but a brief history of the publisher, Thomas Vautrollier, should be given, since he was closely connected with the printer Richard Field (or Ricardo Del Campo) who worked on Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and is assumed to be the friend of the Stratfordian actor who helped him in London upon his first arrival to that city.

Some research on these two printers (Vautrollier and Field) brought up the following facts beginning with an entry dated August 10, 1579: “George Bishop. Richard Field, son of Henry Field, of Stratford, in the County of Warwick, tanner, hath put himself apprentice to George Bishop, citizen and stockowner of London, for 7 years from Michaelmas next September 29, 1579, 2s. 6d.” And another entry immediately follows: “Thomas Vautrollier. It is agreed that this apprentice shall survey the first 6 years of his apprentice with the said Vautrollier to learn the art of printing, and the 7th with the said G. Bishop. November 3.”

⁴⁸³ Plays & Poems of William Shakespeare (London: 1790), Vol. I. 107.

⁴⁸⁴ Medico-Chirurgical Commentary on Shakespeare (1829).

⁴⁸⁵ Shakespere & Typography (New York: Winthrop Press, 1897).

From these entries, it clearly states Richard Field was under two masters, rather unusual for an apprentice. The six years Field spent with Vautrollier were those that determined his career. It is therefore important to go even further back, and learn who the printer Vautrollier was, since William Blades connects the Stratford lad with this printer.

According to the Stationers' books, Vautrollier was a stranger. The author Ames had written that Vautrollier was "a French man from Paris or Rouen, who came into England about the beginning of Elizabeth's Reign." In 1893, the author Roberts has Vautrollier printing books in Edinburgh and London from about 1566 to 1605, with four printers' marks, in all of which an anchor is suspended from the clouds, and two leafy boughs twined, with the motto *Anchora Spei*, [anchor of hope,] ⁴⁸⁶ and with a framework which is identical with that of Guarinus of Basle. Nearly all Vautrollier's books were in Latin and in 1584 he printed an edition of Giordano Bruno's *Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante*, with a dedication to Sir Philip Sidney, and for which he had to flee the country, for the imprint was an obvious and unsuccessful attempt to hoodwink the authorities. ⁴⁸⁷

Thomas Vautrollier was made a brother of the Stationers' Company in October 2, 1564, for the ordinary payment of 2s. 6d. The amount suggests that Vautrollier served as a London apprentice; but there was not full time in Elizabeth's Reign to have done so. He must have commenced with one of those friendly foreign printers who through Queen Mary's Reign printed Protestant books abroad for the English market. In due time, Vautrollier became a distinguished London printer. He seems to have been a man of integrity, skill, and cultivation, a scholar of taste and judgment, though Ames calls him "a curious printer not without Court influence." Besides the ordinary license to print, which he secured in 1573, he had a patent for ten years from June 19, 1574, for some books of divinity, for works in foreign languages, for Ovid, Tully, the *Dialectics* of Peter Ramus, and Plutarch's *Lives*. Noone was to print or import any of these under a penalty of 40s., but Vautrollier was allowed "to keep six foreign workmen, Frenchmen or Dutchmen or such, for the term of ten years without any letter or disturbance of any person." The Privy Seal was attached and granted "to our well beloved subject, Thomas Vautrollier, typographus Londinensis in claustro vulgo Blackfriars commorans" and the patent was renewed more than once.

A note concerning Thomas Vautrollier's privileges is recorded in the Stationers' Registers, July 8, 1578; yet in that same year he was fined by the Company for printing Luther's sermons without a license. In 1582 there was a great outcry made by unprivileged printers against such monopolies as hampered free trade, and an investigation was made. Christopher Barker, the royal printer, made this report: "Marsh was allowed the Latin schoolbooks used in the grammar schools; Vautrollier the other Latin books, such as Tully, Ovid, and diverse other great works in Latin. He hath other small things wherewith he keepeth his presses at work and also worketh for booksellers of the company who keep no presses."

⁴⁸⁶ This motto is also found in the Coat-of-Arms of George Puttenham; a shield with a hand coming out of a cloud and holding onto an anchor entwined with vine. It was also used by Sir Francis Bacon to King James after Bacon's downfall in 1620.

⁴⁸⁷ Roberts, Printers' Marks (London: George Bell & Sons, 1893).

And in Arber's Registry we find "Marsh and Vautrollier have certain special school books."⁴⁸⁸ In Ames's account on the Barkers, he says they had a printing-office in "Bacon-house" near Foster Lane, in which Acts of Parliament were printed. Christopher Barker died in 1509, and after 1588 the business was earned on by his deputies. Robert Barker, his son, was a prisoner in the King's Bench from 1635 and died there in 1645.

The Commissioners on July 18, 1583, advise the printers (Marsh and Vautrollier) having the sole printing of school books, to be able to choose some and leave the rest. Further complaints caused another investigation into monopolies in 1586, when a Royal Commission was appointed that vested, through a Star Chamber decree, the powers of determining these things in the masters, wardens, and assistants of the Stationers' Company. Yet they did not disturb Vautrollier in his copies, nor prevented him from keeping his two presses.

In 1581, Vautrollier seems to have been abroad, and a dispute arose between his wife and Marsh.⁴⁸⁹ Then an apprentice, Richard Field no doubt enjoyed somewhat more liberty in his master's absence, but seems to have proved faithful to his interests and devoted to his mistress, and her daughter Jacquinetta, who afterwards became his wife. In 1584 Vautrollier had again to leave his presses in the charge of his wife, his foreign workmen, and his apprentices; for in that year, having brought out the works of Giordano Bruno⁴⁹⁰ he had to flee the country.

Thomas Baker wrote to Joseph Ames: "Vautrollier was the printer of Jordanus Brunus [Giordano Bruno] in the year 1584, for which he fled, and the next year, being in Edinburgh in Scotland, he first taught that nation the way of good printing, and there stayed, until such time as by the intercession of friends he had got his pardon, as appears by a book dedicated 1587 to the Right Worshipful Mr. Thomas Randolph, Esq., where he returns him thanks for his great favour, and for assisting him in his distress."

During the time Vautrollier was in Edinburgh, his London printing presses were not idle; some books appeared there of the same date, bearing his name and device. Again, Richard Field would be able to prove his ability in the Blackfriars printing-office. Vautrollier returned before September 1585, when Field would have to leave his service and complete his time with George Bishop, for bookselling and publishing experience. In September 1586, he returned to the Blackfriars printing-office, to leave it no more.

Vautrollier appears to have died in 1587, as the last entry of a book to him occurs on February 20 of that year. His widow, Jacquinetta printed one book dated 1588. But on March 4, 1587, the Court of Assistants recorded the following order: "That Mrs. Vautrollier, late wife of

⁴⁸⁸ Arber's Stat. Reg. II, 776.

⁴⁸⁹ Stat. Reg. II, 434, July, 1581.

⁴⁹⁰ Giordano Bruno was born in 1548. He was a monk who had renounced his gown. He had written *On the Signs of the Times*, had travelled all over Europe, lectured in Paris on the Thirty Divine Attributes, and taught the Art of Memory under the title of *De Umbris Idearum*. His conception of the universe as resembling an animal was certainly known to Shakespeare. Bruno anticipates Kepler's view, Descartes's identity of thought and being, Spinoza's of an imminent god, and even the modern theory of evolution. Bruno was burnt at the stake in 1592.

Thomas Vautrollier, deceased, shall not hereafter print any manner of book or books whatsoever, as well by reason that her husband was no printer at the time of his decease, as also for that by the decrees set down in the Star Chamber she is debarred from the same."

This sounds extraordinary. Other printers' widows were allowed to exercise the business or to carry it over to a second or even a third husband. All the more curious, because in the order of succession of master printers, Thomas Vautrollier is mentioned, and it is said that Richard Field married his widow and succeeded to the business. Elsewhere it is stated that Richard Field married the daughter who seems more likely for two reasons: (1) Field's widow (Jakin) succeeded him, when he died in 1625, and carried on the business; and (2) the remarkable statement that Vautrollier was no printer when he died.

It makes one surmise that Vautrollier must already have handed over his business with his daughter to Richard Field. It is likely that Mrs. Vautrollier, being French, might have encountered difficulties with her printing methods.⁴⁹¹ Whatever the case, by 1588 Richard Field had attained the position of heading a printing business in London, much coveted and difficult to be attained, because only twenty-two master printers were allowed in the city; and when a rare vacancy occurred, the Court of Assistants (with the sanction of the Archbishop) claimed the right to elect a successor. Only by inheritance, or by marrying a widow or a daughter, could an eligible young printer evade the risks of an election. Richard Field managed it through matrimony.

The following hypothesis, by various biographers, cannot be substantiated: The printer, Richard Field, was Shakespere's own townsman, and being of about the same age and social rank, the boys probably grew up together as playfellows. Field's father (Henry) was a Tanner at Stratford, and Halliwell-Phillipps says a friend of Shakespere's family. "Early in 1578 young Field came up to London, and at Michaelmas was apprenticed for seven years to George Bishop, printer and publisher. Being in the same trade as Vautrollier, Field would naturally become acquainted with him; and in 1588, a year after he was out of his time, he married Vautrollier's daughter. Here, then, we seem to have a missing link supplied in the chain of Shakespere's history. In 1585 Shakespere came up to London in a 'needy' state. To whom would he be more likely to apply than to his old playmate Richard Field?" Among Richard Field's publications, that can be found in the editions seen in Appendix D, come from the Registered Charts of Printers.

(SOLDIER) Was Shakespeare ever a soldier? Mr. W. J. Thoms in his *Three Notelets on Shakespeare* published in 1865, thought so: "Certainly! I feel morally certain that at some period of his life Shakespeare must have seen military service." In the early Registers of Rowington, which are lost, "there were Shakespeares there bearing this Christian name; [William;] the Richard of Rowington who died in 1561 mentions a son William in his will. The second Richard of that place had a son William mentioned in the will of 1591. The third Richard and his wife Elizabeth had four sons: William, Richard, Thomas, John, and a daughter Joan. William had worked as a labourer without wages on his father's property, with

⁴⁹¹ Thomas Vautrollier's publications can be tracked down to the editions we have provided in Appendix C.

expectation of succeeding to it. But some years before his father's death he went, with his father's permission, out to service, and married a certain Mrs. Margery. His father was incensed against him, and left the little property to his youngest son, John, on November 13, 1613, which was proved in 1614. Which of these was the William Shakespeare whose name appears in the list of the trained soldiers of Rowington, taken before Sir Fulke Greville at Alcester, September 23, 1605, erroneously by some believed to be the poet?"⁴⁹²

The aforementioned entry of Rowington Register follows: "1605. Sept 23. Certificate of the names and Arms of trained soldiers within the Hundred of Barlichway, co. Warwick, taken at Alcester before Sir Fulke Greville, Sir Edw. Greville, and Thos. Spencer. The name of 'William Shakespere' occurs in the list of soldiers of the town of Rowington."⁴⁹³

French (author) quotes Collier: "We have intelligence regarding no other William Shakespere than the poet at that date; [1605] Mrs. Green does not actually imply that the poet was the soldier in question, but Mr. Thoms⁴⁹⁴ claims him in that capacity, on the score of his possessing a copyhold in Stratford, held of the manor of Rowington. But if the poet had consented to serve he surely would not be described as 'of the town of Rowington,' in respect of a very small copyhold in another place, at some distance; his proper designation would be 'William Shakspeare, gentleman, of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the division of Stratford, and hundred of Barlichway,' whereas Rowington is in the division of Henley. At the date, September 1605, the poet was one of the principal personages in his native town; he owned the best house in it, to which he had added, in 1602, at the cost of £320 some 107 acres of arable land; and had also purchased on July 24, 1605, for £440, a moiety of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe; and he enjoyed from various sources a large income, which Collier reckons to have been in 1608, 'at the very least,' £400 per annum, a sum which must be multiplied considerably to give an idea of its real value."

The actual sum as stated by French, in today's currency would be £40,000. "Add to this," French concludes, "great probability that the poet was lame as we gather from several passages in his sonnets, and to which impediment Mr. Thorns even alludes, it does not seem at all likely that he would serve as a common soldier."⁴⁹⁵

The myths take leadership over truth trailing behind in obscurity by any Shakespeare-biographer, that passes GO where no limit of imagination is claimed. "In 1605, the year of the Gunpowder Plot, Shakespere paid £440 for an unexpired lease of tithes in Stratford. This purchase conferred the right of sepulture within the chancel of the church, and to it we probably owe the preservation of the Shakespeare monument."⁴⁹⁶ This is also corroborated by Stopes. In the same year (1605) Shakespere was engaged in a lawsuit respecting the share in the tithes just mentioned. The draft of a Bill was to be filed before Lord Ellesmere; it informs us that some of the lessees refusing to contribute their proper shares of a reserved rent, a

⁴⁹² C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Family* (London: Elliot Stock, 1901).

⁴⁹³ Dom. Con-esp. 1569, Vol. Ixi: Registers of Rowington, 234.

⁴⁹⁴ W. J. Thoms, *Three Notelets on Shakespeare* (1865).

⁴⁹⁵ *Shakspeareana Genealogica* (Cambridge: University Press, 1869), part I. 526.

⁴⁹⁶ Robert Frazer, *The Silent Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1915), 54.

greater proportion fell to “Richard Lane of Awston in the county of Warwick esquire, Thomas Green of Stratford in the said county of Warwick esquire, and William Shackspeare of Stratford.” The relationship between this Thomas Green (1595–1640) in the draft Bill, and Shakespere has not been fully investigated. It is curious to notice that he may have been a son of Thomas Green (alias Shakespere) who was buried at Stratford on March 6, 1589. “Green was not an unusual name in the neighbourhood, but it appears from the Register of Aston Cantlow that a family of the name resided at Wilmecote, where Shakespere’s parents had landed interests.”⁴⁹⁷

Green is alleged to have been Shakespere’s solicitor and cousin, a Counselor at Law of the Middle Temple, admitted to that Inn on November 20, 1595, and was called to the Bar on October 29, 1600. He became town clerk in 1603, but did not leave Stratford till 1617, and became identified with London attaining considerable eminence at the metropolitan Bar, becoming a reader of his Inn in 1621 and treasurer in 1629.⁴⁹⁸ Green was supposed to be residing under some unknown conditions at “New Place” at the time of Shakespere’s death.⁴⁹⁹ Malone explains Green’s birth-place as ascertained by the following lines, which he speaks in one of the old comedies, in the character of a clown.

I prattled Poesie in my nurse’s arms,
And, born where late our swan of Avon sung:
In Avon’s streams we both of us have laved,
And both came out together.

Malone continues to disagree with Lee, when he says of Thomas Green, “he was, perhaps, a Kinsman of Shakespere’s. In the Register of the parish of Stratford, Thomas Green (alias Shakespere) is said to have been buried March 6, 1589. He might have been the actor’s father.” When Lee wrote that Green “might have been the actor’s father” it is not clear what he alluded to. A great many names occur in the Parish-Register, with an “alias” the meaning of which it is not very easy to ascertain: They may have been described “alias” due to being illegitimate; that this Thomas Green may have been the son of one of Shakespere’s Kinsmen, by a daughter of Thomas Green who resided in Stratford, is possible. In the Parish-Register we frequently find the word “bastard” expressly added to the names of the children baptized. Perhaps this latter form was only used in the case of servants and labourers, and the illegitimate offspring of the higher order was more delicately denoted by an “alias.” It cannot be absolutely certain if the Stratfordian actor joined the military service. We are told that Ben Jonson was in close friendship with him; is it possible these two personalities had some connection with the government, military or otherwise?

Ben Jonson was in correspondence with Sir Robert Cecil, prior that Minister’s death (1612). To give some flavour of Ben Jonson’s connections with the British intelligence of the time of the Gunpowder Plot (the same year Shakespere had bought a £440 worth moiety of the tithes of

⁴⁹⁷ J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

⁴⁹⁸ Middle Temple Branch Book.

⁴⁹⁹ J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines* (Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., 1884).

Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe) we give two letters. The first is dated May 4, 1605, six months prior to the Gunpowder Plot that occurred on November 5, and shows that Ben Jonson was already in receipt of some favours from Cecil, which no doubt he had done some past intelligent service. The second letter is dated November 8, 1605, three days after the Gunpowder Plot.

British Museum Collection of Cecil's Letters

MSS. 61778, fol. 437

Letter written by Ben Jonson to Robert Cecil

May 4, 1605⁵⁰⁰

It has still been the tyranny of my fortune, so to oppress my endeavours that before I can show myself grateful (in the least) for former benefits, I am enforced to provoke your bounties for more, may it not seem grievous to your Lordship that now my innocence calls upon you (next the deity) to his defense. God himself is not averted at just men's cries, and you that approach that divine goodness and supply it here on earth in your place and honours cannot employ your aides more worthily than to the common succor of honesty and virtue, how humbly so ever it be placed. I am here my most honourable Lord, unexamined, or unheard, committed to a vile prison, and with me a gentleman (whose name may perhaps have come to your Lordship), one Mr. George Chapman, a learned and most honest man, the cause (would I could name some worthier, though I wish we had known none worthy our imprisonment) is a (the word yerkes me, that our fortune hath necessitated us to so despised a course) a play, my Lord, whereof in hope there is no man can justly complain that hath the virtue to think but favourable of himself, of our judge being an equal care; marry, if with prejudice we be made guilty for our time, we must embrace the asinine virtue 'Patience.'

My noble Lord, they deal not charitably who are too witty in another man's works, and utter sometimes their own malicious meanings, under our words; I protest to your honour and call God to testimony (since my first error which yet is punished in me, more with my shame than with my bondage) I have so attempered my style that I have given no cause to any good man of grief, and if to any ill by touching at any general vice, it hath always been with a regard and sparing of particular persons. I may be otherwise reported, but if all that be accused should be presently guilty, there are few men would stand in the state of innocence. I beseech your most honoured Lordship suffer not other men's letters or faults past to be made my crimes, but let me be examined, both by all my works past and this present and not trust to ruin me but my books, for she is an unjust deliverer both of great and small actions, whether I have ever (in anything I have written private or public) given offence to a nation, to any public order, or state, or any person of honour, or authority; but have equally laboured to keep their dignity as my own person safe. If others have transgressed, let not me be entitled to their follies, but least, in being too diligent for my excuse, I may incur the suspicion of being guilty, I become a most humble suitor to your Lordship, that, with the honourable Lord Chamberlain (to whom I have in like manner petitioned), you will be pleased to be the grateful means of our coming to answer, or if, in your wisdom, it shall be thought unnecessary that your Lordship shall be the most honoured cause of our liberty. When saving us from our gereson you shall remove us to

⁵⁰⁰ This letter can also be found in Haynes and Marsden's collections. Original spelling has been kept.

another, which is eternally to bind us and our muses to the thankful honouring of you and yours to posterity and your own virtues have, by many descents of ancestors, enabled you to time your honours.

Most devoted in heart as words.

Ben Jonson.

British Museum Collection of Cecil's Letters

MSS. 61778, fol. 437

Letter written by Ben Jonson to Robert Cecil

November 8, 1605⁵⁰¹

[Three days after the Gunpowder Plot]

May It Please Your Lordship:

To understand there hath been no want in me, either of labour or of sincerity, in the discharge of this business to the satisfaction of your Lordship and the state, and, whereas yesterday, on the first mention of it, I took the most ready course (to my present thought) by the Venetian Ambassador's Chaplain, who not only apprehended it well but was of mind with me, that no man of conscience or any indifferent love to his country would deny to do it, and withal engage himself to find one absolute in all numbers for the purpose, which he willed me (before a gentleman of good credit, who is my testimony) to signify to your Lordship in his name. It falls out since that that party will not be found (for so he returns answer), upon which I have made attempts in other places, but can speak with no one in person (all being either removed or so concealed upon this present mischief), but by second means I have received answers of doubts and difficulties that they well make it a question to the arch-priest with such like suspensions. So that to tell your Lordship the plainly my heart; I think they are all so enweaved in it that it will make 500 gentlemen less of the religion, within this week, if they carry their understanding about them.

For myself, if I had been a priest, I would have put on wings to such an occasion and have thought no adventure, where I might have done (besides His Majesty and my country) all Christianity so good service. And so much have I sent to some of them; if it shall please your Lordship, I shall yet make further trial. You cannot, in the meantime, be provided. I do not only, with all readiness, offer my services but will perform it with as much integrity as your particular favour, or His Majesty's right in any subject he hath can exact. Your Honour's most perfect servant and lover.

Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson, "born a Calvinist he became a Catholic," says Hepworth Dixon. "After the Powder Plot he joined the Court religion and helped in hunting down his colleagues."⁵⁰² An easy question can be asked: Did Shakespere ever assist in the intelligence service to capture the Gunpowder plotters? The money needed (£440 in today's currency £40,000) to buy "the unexpired term of the moiety of the tithe-lease of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe" would have been generated from some lucrative source. It is well documented how

⁵⁰¹ Original spelling has been kept.

⁵⁰² Royal Windsor (Vol. IV. 92).

the intelligent service was not humble to its spies in the Elizabethan era; however, in the Jacobean era, and under the effects of a Gunpowder Plot, King James and his treasury would not have been stingy to capture the plotters.

(SOLICITOR) Malone argued Shakespere must have been an articled clerk in a solicitor's office, and in John Campbell's hands, in his 1859 *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements Considered*, Shakespere was taken to a more modest level of profession, fully developed into an attorney in his native town who "then visited London several times on his master's business, where on one of these occasions he may have been introduced to the green-room at Blackfriars, by one of his countrymen connected with the theatre."

(WIZARD) Charles Dickens told of this American who was convinced that the poet Shakespeare was an American, because of the extensive knowledge in the human races shown in the Shakespearean works, even though in the *Essays of Thorns and Dr. Bell*, Nathaniel Holmes writes: "Shakespeare understood the whole machinery of Astrology, Alchemy, Witchcraft, and Sorcery; and that not merely in the sense of popular tradition, but as the written literature of the day." It was also an American who presented to the Stratford Museum, in 1812, a signed album, filled with names of renowned men, Kings, Princes, and noblemen, who never were at Stratford. This fraudulent book sold at an auction on June 4, 1896, for £130, when the Museum was immediately supplied with another alleged authentic book and a school desk at which it was assumed how Shakespere "studied cards and dice."

Joseph Skipsey, past custodian at the Stratford Museum left in disgust at the fraud his employers commanded him to put upon an innocent public. Skipsey died in 1903 and left a statement of his reason for leaving his position: "The Museum was a stench in his nostrils."⁵⁰³

⁵⁰³ Lewis F. Bostelmann, Rutland (New York: Rutland Publishing Co., 1911).

EPILOGUE

“If Shakespere wrote the plays and poems ascribed to him with all these encumbering faults and disadvantages he had, he is entitled to the very highest praise. But if he did not write them, why should not this idol be pulled down and broken to pieces, even though it is covered with the gilding of centuries of undeserved praise?”

—John H. Stotsenburg (1904)⁵⁰⁴

The first writer, without intending to do so, who actually casted a doubt about the Shakespere claim was Richard Farmer. In 1767, Farmer wrote an essay on the learning of Shakespearean works. In the Preface of his work he writes: “It is indeed strange that any real friends of our immortal poet should be still willing to force him into a situation which is not tenable; treat him as a learned man, and what shall excuse the grossest violations of history, chronology and geography?” Moreover, it was Joseph C. Hart in his 1848 *Romance of Yachting*⁵⁰⁵ who began the authorship controversy, casting the first public dispute with his denial of the Shakespere title. Hart maintained that Shakespere of Stratford did not write the plays, and was merely the owner of all the properties of the theatre which included the plays possessed by the establishment, and that the plays were written by poorly paid collaborators.

William H. Smith was the first writer who asserted that Shakespere could not write; Halliwell-Phillipps came to the conclusion that neither the father “John Shakspeare could write, although he was employed to audit the accounts of the corporation, and John Taylor, one of the chamberlains, signs with a mark.”⁵⁰⁶ (Figure 7) But the man who has done the most damage to bring this powerful item of evidence against the Shakespere claim before the literary world, is William Henry Burr (1819–1908) who was a noted writer and expert in handwriting, and an official stenographer of the Senate of the United States. Burr gave specimens of Shakespere’s handwriting that had been termed as authentic, six in number. He proved the signatures were deceitful, since there were no other materials to compare those signatures with. His conclusion was to claim the signatures “downright nonsense as being the Bard’s.”

Richard G. White, an advocate for Shakespere, also had his doubts: “Unlike Dante, unlike Milton, unlike Goethe, unlike the great poets and tragedians of Greece and Rome, Shakespeare left no trace upon the political or even the social life of his era. Of his eminent countrymen, Raleigh, Sidney, Spenser, Bacon, Cecil, Walsingham, Coke, Camden, Drake, Hobbes, Inigo Jones, Herbert of Cherbury, Laud, Pym, Hampden, Selden, Walton, Wotton, and John Donne (1573–1631) may be properly reckoned as his contemporaries; and yet there is no proof

⁵⁰⁴ An Impartial Study of the Shakespeare Title (Kentucky: John Morton & Co).

⁵⁰⁵ New York: Harper & Brothers.

⁵⁰⁶ A Life of William Shakespeare (London: John Russell Smith, 1847).

whatever that he was personally known to either of these men or to any others of less note among the statesmen, scholars, and artists of his day."

Campbell believed the genius of biography neglected William Shakespeare in his own day, because she gave records of men comparatively uninteresting and said nothing about the paragon of nature, though embalmed the dwarfs of our literature and left its colossus to be buried in oblivion. Perhaps our baulked curiosity can fix on no individual more strangely responsible for this than Shakespeare himself.

Not less on the same lines was Dr. Samuel Johnson: "No author ever gave up manuscript works to fortune and to time with so little care. So careless was this great poet of future fame, that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was little declined into the veil of years, before he could be disgusted with fatigue or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those which had been already published from the depravations that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny by giving them to the world in their genuine state."

That the surname "Shakespeare" is attached to some thirty-seven plays, is of universal acceptance; that he carried on business and correspondence, one cannot feel assured that he did this, yet the mystery that transcends all others, and one of the most unaccountable facts in the whole history of literature, is that not a single scrap of this vast mass of manuscript (if there was any) has ever been discovered. The whole has vanished. All that insatiable curiosity and unwearied diligence have hitherto detected about Shakespeare serves rather to disappoint and perplex us than furnish the slightest illustration of his character. "It is not the Register of his baptism, or the draft of his will, or the orthography of his name that we seek." Hallam noted. "No letter of his writing, no record of his conversations, no character of him drawn with any fullness by a contemporary has been produced."

Collier's conjecture that follows (after following Malone's conjecture) does not even have the benefit of "tradition" for a foundation, yet it gave the cue to Walters (author) who does not hesitate to treat Collier's guess as a biographical fact: "We decidedly concur with Malone in thinking that after Shakspeare quitted the free school, he was employed in the office of an attorney."

The mischief caused by such partisan recklessness is that when the biographer of the much loaded Shakespere comes along who has no time or inclination to examine into the facts, he accepts the conjectures and assertions of such writers or biographers as mentioned in this work and the rest of them as facts, and palms them off as facts on the unsuspecting public. To add to this is the sudden flushes of money that came into the purse of the Stratfordian actor, which has never been explained. Halliwell-Phillipps was astonished at it, and Fleay passed it by unnoticed. Lee estimates on a "reasonable system of accountancy" as he called it, to the takings of the Globe theatre, at £3,000 per annum. He then reduces the £3,000 to £1,500, after consulting Malone's estimate.

Then there is a mirage first meeting between Shakespere and Ben Jonson that came from Rowe in his *Life* (1709) that we investigated. Rowe records a “tradition” that the actor’s acquaintance with Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good nature. Even more, Rowe had the tenacity to tell the public that it was Shakespere who made Ben Jonson great and famous.

Thomas Fuller, in his *State Worthies* tells us “many were the wit combats betwixt him [Shakespere] and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English Man of War.” Then in his writing of the poet Michael Drayton he stated Shakespere was “a butcher’s son, born at Atherston upon Stower in Warwickshire.” This statement is curious, if only to point the coincidence that it was in the company with Jonson and Drayton where that myth originated having Shakespere meet his final “merry meeting” a short time before he died.

Another fantasy is merited to Bernard Lintot, author of an edition of the Shakespeare plays in 1710. He said that King James wrote Shakespere a letter with his own hand, and that a credible person then living in 1710 saw the letter in Sir William D’Avenant’s possession. But Lintot took care not to mention the name of the credible person, and as Appleton Morgan well said, “had D’Avenant ever possessed such a letter, he would have taken good care that the world should never hear the last of it. It would have been set out in every biography of Shakespeare at full length.”

The Shakesperites invented Shakespere as a schoolmaster. It was absolutely necessary to give him some education higher than that which the few months at the Stratford grammar school could have given him, though no records have given credit that he ever attended school and all biographers are silent on the prequalification needed to attend school, which was to be able to read and write in English and Latin by the age of seven; yet we offer them the benefit of a doubt, but insist on the three preliminary qualifications needed to attend school in those days.

William Beeston told John Aubrey that there was a rumour how Shakespere was a schoolmaster, and so Aubrey gave out the story for what it was worth. I did advise earlier that too much reliance must not be placed upon the statements of this “industrious antiquarian” called Aubrey. But it did not end there. Biographers have told us that Shakespere was a clerk in a law office and a law student. This story was required for the reason that in some of the plays legal phrases are used and a familiarity with law terms is occasionally noticeable. Of course, if there was any evidence whatever to be deduced on this point, which would be worthy of the least consideration, it would long ago have been unearthed and quickly heralded to the world.

And if what we have learned of these assumptions should take away our Oh’s and Ah’s, we would probably cringe at the fact that they also made Shakespeare a lame from childhood. And there is a “Tyler hypothesis” that was set in motion by Thomas Tyler himself, which was aided by a Rev. W. A. Harrison. This hypothesis briefly states Shakespere had a liaison with a woman called Mary Fitton who was Queen Elizabeth’s maids-of-honour.

Tyler was willing to show he had grounds that Mary Fitton could be shown, by letters and other documents of the time, to be the person with whom Lord Pembroke was involved in a scandal. For the purpose of fitting Shakespere in as the writer of the Shakespearean sonnets, the reading public is asked to believe that the gentle Shakespere seduced or was seduced by Mary Fitton, and that he being the seducer, put the whole matter in print in a very delicate way in his sonnets, for all after-generations to read. Although Tyler and the Rev. Harrison produced no reference whatever that Shakespere ever knew Mary Fitton, this incredible story is suggested by them, and the Bard's character is blackened as is Mary Fitton's in order to impress the credulous reader with the belief that this uneducated actor from Stratford wrote sonnets which he never claimed to have written in the first place.

If Malone hunted down Ireland the forger for literature prosperity, probably he would need to hunt down all those Shakespereites that existed, including himself, in another life time, only to return in the future and hunt down the current conjecturers that exist. The biographies of Shakespeare are far from actual facts; they are planted upon a guessing tree branched with conjecture and blossomed with "possibly," "maybe," and "perhaps." They are mainly works of the imagination, more or less adorned and beautified according to the ability and talents of the composer of the biography. Where the facts do not fit, some excuse is found to bury the fact, and where there are no facts, invention is used. Sooner, than later, such a system need come tumbling down as Jack and Jill.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) an English poet and literary critic, in 1811 well said, that "in spite of all the biographies, ask your own hearts; ask your own commonsense to conceive the possibility of this man being the anomalous, the wild, the irregular genius of our daily criticism. What! Are we to have miracles in sport? Or (I speak reverently) does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?"

Hallam noted, that "if there was a Shakespeare of earth, as I suspect, there was also one of heaven, and it is of him we desire to learn more." I definitely concur with that.

Fleay could not help but confess how "previous investigators have, with industrious minuteness, already ascertained for us every detail that can reasonably be expected of Shakespeare's private life. With laborious research they have raked together the records of petty debts, of parish assessments, of scandalous tradition, and of idle gossip. I do not think that, when stripped of verbiage and what the slang of the day calls 'padding,' much more than this can be claimed as the result of the voluminous writings on this side of his career."

The German critic Schlegel, in 1808, was flabbergasted that an actor could have written the works: "Generally speaking, I consider all that has been said about him personally to be a mere fable, a blind extravagant error."

Benjamin D'Israeli, in 1837, was not far behind when he said: "And who is Shakespere? Said Cadurcis. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single whole play? I doubt it."

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who declared, in 1838, that he could not “marry” the actor “to his verse,” characterizing his life as “obscure and profane.”⁵⁰⁷

W. H. Furness, in 1866, thought not alone in thinking the actor could not have written the plays: “I am one of the many who have never been able to bring the life of Shakespere and the plays of Shakespeare within a planetary space of each other. Are there any two things in the world more incongruous?”

Edwin P. Whipple, in 1869, brought it more to his profession, when he said, “to this individuality we tack on a universal genius, which is about as reasonable as it would be to take the controlling power of gravity from the sun and attach it to one of the asteroids.”⁵⁰⁸

James R. Lowell, in 1870, sounded as he was in total frustration when he said, “nobody believes any longer that immediate inspiration is possible in modern times; and yet everybody seems to take it for granted of this one man Shakespere wrote those plays.”

Henry Hallam said: “Shakespeare is but a name. Licentious amours and drunken frolics don’t tell us who wrote *Lear*.”⁵⁰⁹

Geo. James mentioned: “To believe that Wm. Shakespeare (Stratford) wrote these (plays) is to violate every principle of commonsense and be blind to truths plain as beacon lights for our guidance.”

And last but not least, A. F. Gefroerer, once Librarian at Stuttgart (Germany), wrote: “It was impossible that the historical Shakespere should have composed the Shake-Spearian [sic] dramas.”

When in 1922, Stopes investigated the Registry of the Court of Records at Stratford she declared that records from 1569 to 1585 were still wanting. Her investigation was entered into a book called *Seventeenth Century Accounts of the Masters of the Revels*; her conclusion was a truth which haunts us even to this day: “It is very remarkable how often records fail us, just when they are most needed, for the life of Shakespeare.” Mr. John Richard de Capel Wise gives closure to this chapter:

Not one scrap, not a half-sheet of paper of Shakespeare’s handwriting ever turns up: The most painful search offers little to our knowledge; nothing beyond a name or two, or another date or so. His life is at best but a collection of fines and leases; everything connected with his private life perished with him. When he died he carried with him his secret.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁷ Representative Men (1866), 215.

⁵⁰⁸ Shakespeare (Boston: “Atlantic Monthly” June, August 1867).

⁵⁰⁹ Shakespeare once more (Boston: “North American Review” April, 1868).

⁵¹⁰ Shakespeare: His Birthplace and its Neighbourhood (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1861).

Should the world of the Stratfordian actor have been of his own creation, we would not have written this work. Unfortunately, his world is of The Shakespereites Club, and poorly done at that. “We hunger for Shakespeare’s life, and we receive these husks; we open our mouths for food, and we break our teeth against these stones.”⁵¹¹ Indeed, we also have found husks, as Mr. White did, yet refused to crunch.

“I have written, you have read, the matter is before you; judge of it.”
—Aristotle

⁵¹¹ Memoirs (Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1865).

APPENDIX A

"If we try to summarize our assets for acquaintance with the life of Shakespeare it becomes clear that a large mass of the material usually accepted as biography must be treated only as tradition, much of it as tradition of an improbable sort."

—Orie Latham Hatcher⁵¹²

Pope's famous edition (1725)⁵¹³ of Shakespeare came out in six volumes (quarto) and sold for £217. 12s. In 1728, a second edition was issued, then a third at Glasgow in 1766, which found its way to Jacob Tonson's sale the following year. A total of 140 copies (for which the subscribers paid six guineas) were sold among booksellers, at the price of sixteen shillings per set; another 750 copies were then printed. A final edition was printed in Birmingham (1768). In the Preface of the 1725 edition is prefixed an alleged sketch of the Bard, which Oldys tells us was created from "a juvenile portrait of James I." There is no reference given by Oldys upon his theory and many claim it is an engraving of George Vertue's, which was also prefixed in Mrs. Griffith's work, appearing as a noble ornament. Here also, Pope's sketch was entirely different than the First Folio sketch. (See Figure 11)

Pope possessed many old quartos including the first two Folios, but his edition was "somewhat careless" critics tell us, though the subdivided scenes are more minutely done than Rowe, after the fashion of the French stage division, where a new scene begins with every new character instead of after the stage has been cleared. Pope's explanations of the words which appeared difficult in Shakespeare's text were often "laughably" far from the truth. He also rearranged the lines in order to give them the studied smoothness characteristic of the eighteenth century.

However casual Pope's edition was, he confesses that "in what I have done, I have rather given a proof of my willingness and desire, than of my ability, to do him justice. I have discharged the dull duty of an editor, to my best judgment, with more labour than I expect thanks, with a religious abhorrence of all innovation, and without any indulgence to my private sense or conjecture. The method taken in this edition will show itself."⁵¹⁴

Then Lewis Theobald's edition (1726) came. In this little pamphlet, most of the material was devoted to *Hamlet*. Theobald published his work under the title: *Shakespeare Restored*; it had many corrections of Pope's errors that were not taken lightly by the latter who tried to annihilate Theobald's reputation by writing satires against him and by injuring him in every possible way in print.

Theobald, with many faults, was deemed "a real critic," and his re-edition of the plays in seven volumes of the edition 1733, took the place of Pope's among students, as the latter had

⁵¹² A Book For Shakespeare Plays And Pageants (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1916).

⁵¹³ Malone gives the year 1723.

⁵¹⁴ Prefix to Pope's quarto edition of works (1728) 6 Vols.

superseded Rowe's. In the Preface is prefixed an alleged sketch of the Bard by the engraver Arlaud; again different from the First Folio sketch. There is even some little resemblance of this sketch to the one in William Marshall's print (1640) of Shakespeare's poems. Marshall was one of those laborious artists whose engravings were chiefly confined to the ornamenting of books; his patience is all we can admire in his prints, which are numerous. "He worked with the engraver only, but in a dry tasteless style; and from the similarity which appears in the design of all his portraits, it is supposed that he worked from his own drawings after the life, though he did not add the words *ad vivum*, as was common. If we grant this to be the case, the artist will acquire very little additional honour upon that account; for there is full as great a want of taste manifest in the design, as in the execution of his works on copper."⁵¹⁵

Almost eighteen years later came Sir Thomas Hanmer's edition (1744), under the auspices of the Oxford University in six volumes (quarto). The edition was first sold for three guineas, then at the price of ten before it was reprinted. Hanmer's critical powers were not eye-catching, although some of his readings were of value enough to be adopted by later editors. The Oxford edition was an elegant and ornamental piece of book-making, containing many engravings, termed "a worthy shrine for the great poet's literary remains." A sketch appears in the edition of the Vignette which is designed by Wale, and engraved by Woodfield; it depicts the figures of Apollo and Minerva (the goddess Athena) and bears some resemblance to a portrait that was then displayed at Wentworth House.

Then, in 1747, came Warburton's edition. Warburton was a critic "of the slashing order," we are told, who added little of value to the fast accumulating commentaries. He quarreled fiercely with Lewis Theobald, accusing him of both ignorance and lack of critical ability, on grounds to the latter's corrections to Pope's work. As Warburton tells us, his edition was to "first sort in restoring the poet's genuine text;" then to "an explanation of the author's meaning." His final effort was to "a critical explanation of the author's beauties and defects; but chiefly of his beauties, whether in style, thought, sentiment, character, or composition."⁵¹⁶ At the Jacob Tonson's sale, in the year 1767, the remainder of Warburton's edition, in eight volumes (8vo) printed in 1747 (of which the original price was £2. 8s. and a total of 1,000 copies printed) was sold; an additional 178 copies sold each at 18s.

Dr. Samuel Johnson's edition in eight volumes (1765) was long-delayed, and aside from a few commonsense explanations, was not of much merit till Tyrwhitt and Steevens's edition came in 1766. The Tyrwhitt edition was a reprint of twenty of the early quartos by Steevens in the same year, who was led by some sentiment for humour: He would play mischievous practical jokes with a literary twist, and used both the forged letter and the anonymous libel to further his ends. His vitriolic jests led him even to make obscene notes to common passages in the plays, and by some peculiarity attribute these comments to two clergymen, whose names he mentioned. However, Mr. Beverley Warner had said of Steevens's edition: "The student of Shakespeare owes him an enormous debt,"⁵¹⁷ a comment no doubt in tribute to Steevens's

⁵¹⁵ Strutt's Dictionary of Engravers, Vol. II. 125.

⁵¹⁶ Edmond Malone, Prolegomena (London: John Cawthorn, 1804), Vol. I.

⁵¹⁷ Famous Introductions to Shakespeare's Plays (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1906).

contribution to the quartos instead of the Folio copies. In collaboration with Dr. Johnson, and assisted in a very moderate degree by Malone, Steevens issued a ten volume edition in 1773 which was revised in 1778 and became the basis for Isaac Reed's edition of 1793. A facsimile of the Marshall sketch, from the 1640 Shakespeare poems, was also added in these editions.

We have Edward Capell's edition (1768) by Capell, and termed "the greatest scholarly work since Lewis Theobald's;" it was the first rigorous comparison between the readings of the Folios and the quartos, and Capell's quartos, now in the British Museum, are of the greatest value to Shakespeare scholars. With Capell's edition begins the tendency to get back to the earliest form of the text and not to try to improve Shakespeare to the ideal of what the editor thinks Shakespeare should have said.

Capell's edition gave path to Edmond Malone's edition (1790) that was published in ten volumes. "No Shakespearean scholar ranks higher than his in reputation," said Durham, and of various and numerous editions that followed up to 1865, these may be mentioned: The most important was James Boswell's so-called *Third Variorum* in twenty-one volumes; in 1854 and 1861 appeared the edition in Germany of Delius, whose text was used in the *Leopold Shakespeare* published in 1876; in 1855, republished in 1861, was Halliwell-Phillipps's edition in fifteen volumes, which contains enormous masses of antiquarian material; in 1857 and 1865 appeared the first American edition of White's, which contained many original suggestions. Finally, between 1863 and 1866 appeared the edition of Messer. Clark & Wright, known as the Cambridge edition. Wright, "the dean of living Shakespearean scholars" is chiefly responsible for this text; reprinted with a few changes into *The Globe* edition, and is considered the chief popular text. Prof. Neilson's single volume (Cambridge series 1906) was the scholarly edition in America, which follows in most cases the positions taken by Clark and Wright.

APPENDIX B

This Appendix deals on various comments made by biographers, authors, researchers of past and present, who give their opinion of the alleged Shakespere/Hathaway/ Whateley marriage.

Savage (author) tells us how “there is nothing unusual in this [marriage] license. Others of the same kind were issued this day. Advent was approaching, a prohibited season for marriages. After December 1, the Eve of Advent Sunday, no wedding could be celebrated until January 13, without special and costly license, on penalty of excommunication.” As regards to Anne Whateley’s name instead of Anne Hathaway’s name, the same author indicates it was done “by a slip on the part of the clerk who entered the issue of the license in the Episcopal Register, the name Whateley is given for Hathaway. It may be a mistake of sight, as suggested by Joseph Hill in his *Historic Warwickshire*.⁵¹⁸

Other biographers and scholars have also waved away the discrepancy of the name to “clerical error,” as Peter Levi comments on the mistakes of registers, calling the clerk a nincompoop.⁵¹⁹ Furthermore, many have even assumed there was a relative of Shakespere’s living in Temple Grafton, which could excuse the irregularity of the difference of names, yet we have found no trace of such a relative.

Lee theorized “the maiden-name of Shakespeare’s wife was Whateley is quite untenable, and it is unsafe to assume that the Bishop’s clerk, when making a note of the grant of the license in his register, erred so extensively as to write ‘Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton’ for ‘Anne Hathaway of Shottery.’ The husband of Anne Whateley cannot reasonably be identified with the poet. He was doubtless another of the numerous Shakespeares who abounded in the diocese of Worcester.”

Anthony Burgess offers another variation of what may have happened: “It is reasonable to believe that Shakspeare wished to marry a girl named Anne Whateley. The name is common enough in the Midlands and is even attached to a four-star hotel in Horse Fair, Banbury. Her father may have been a friend of his father, he may have sold kidskin cheap, there are various reasons why the Shakspeares and the Whateleys, or their nubile children, might become friendly. Sent on skin-buying errands to Temple Grafton, Shakespere could have fallen for a comely daughter, sweet as May and shy as a fawn. He was eighteen and highly susceptible. Knowing something about girls, he would know that this was the real thing. Something perhaps, quite different from what he felt about mistress Hathaway of Shottery. But why, attempting to marry Anne Whateley, had he put himself in the position of having to marry the other Anne? I suggest that, to use the crude but convenient properties of the old women’s-magazine morality-stories, he was exercised by love for the one and lust for the other. I find it convenient to imagine he knew Hathaway carnally, for the first time, in the spring of 1582.”⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁸ Minutes and Accounts (Dugdale Society, 1924), Vol. V.

⁵¹⁹ Peter Levi, *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

⁵²⁰ Shakespeare (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970).

Gray noted how a clerical error is possible, “since the whole of the entries in the lists of licenses appear to have been written by the same scribe, probably a junior whose principal qualifications were neat penmanship and some knowledge of Latin, the language in which the Bishop’s Registers are written.”⁵²¹ But what Gray kept secret, was how the entire entries, whether of Baptisms, Marriages, or Burials, are all, without exception, in the same handwriting, from the first entry March 25, 1558, to September 14, 1600. After such an important discovery, Gray’s fantastical imagination can be removed as fact.

Joseph Hill, in some notes in his edition of *Historic Warwickshire*, writes: “The word ‘Whateley’ [peculiar a surname should be termed as a word] shows that the original off-hand memorandum in some draft or rough book for subsequent entry in the registry was not made with care; it contains, in fact, three inaccuracies: the date, the name and the parish. The original in Latin would be ‘Annam Hathwey’ and when some days subsequently it was entered in the register by a neat copyist, he mistook the ‘m’ for ‘w’ and the small and capital ‘h’ being precisely alike he would be easily misled, particularly as it was an invariable habit, at that period to curtail the terminal of a name, whilst the first stroke of ‘w’ was formed by many writers like the letter ‘t.’” And Hill takes the same path as Gray, not mentioning the identical handwriting to all these parish entries.



Figure 24: Sir William D’Avenant (1606–1668)

It is of no surprise then, how various fables began to grow behind Shakespeare’s alleged marriage; they began before the end of the seventeenth century, with Aubrey’s reference to the

⁵²¹ Joseph William Gray, *Shakespeare’s Marriage* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1905).

wife of an Oxford vintner, no other than our Sir William D'Avenant whom we met in the beginning of this work.⁵²² Within this same frame, we may add the fable that was coming from D'Avenant's son with the same first name: He claimed to be the illegitimate child of the Stratford actor; that his parents had owned a tavern in Oxford, in the high road between London and Stratford, the route passing through Islip where some tales have Shakespere travelling to frequently and, that he had been conceived during a "stopover." The earliest authority we have on this fable comes from two sources: Anthony à Wood, when he described the "mother was a very beautiful woman, of a good wit and conversation, in which she was imitated by none of her children but by this William;"⁵²³ and also from a suggestion which had been previously made by Pope, which Oldys inserts in his work, entitled: *Choice Notes*.⁵²⁴

In the *Catalogue of the Shakespeare Exhibition*, printed by the Oxford Press in 1916, they wisely "dismiss the suggested scandal about Mrs. Davenant: It is a discredit to her son to have allowed it to be hinted. With it goes the foolish story about the old Head of a House who jested at the boy Will's mention of the poet as his godfather. It is an old story, told long before it was told of Shakespere."

Alfred C. Calmour, in his 1894 publication, entitled: *Fact and Fiction about Shakespeare*, also disbelieved the story. "Looking at the records of the D'Avenant incident as I may, I see nothing but conjecture in the repeated statements that the vintner's wife ever formed an attachment for Shakespere, or he for her." We also see some rumours based on a much more questionable ground, relying solely on an entry in the alleged Stratford Baptismal Register for the year 1600: "Wilhelmus filius [son of] Wilhelmi," for attributing another circumstance of the same kind (another illegitimate son) to Shakespere.

The next contribution of fables was made between 1750 and 1778 by Oldys in some speculation as to Anne Hathaway's beauty; the probability was that the sonnets were addressed to her "on some suspicion of her infidelity."⁵²⁵ In a copy of Gerard Langbaine's 1691 *Account of the English Dramatic Poets*, the following is written between the printed lines at the top of page 456: "His poem called *Lover's Affection* seems to be written to his beautiful wife under some humour of inconstancy." The sonnets referred to by Langbaine are No. 92 to No. 95, which were printed in the 1640 edition under the title of *A Lover's Affection though his Love proves inconstant*. There are no grounds for the supposition that Anne Hathaway is alluded to in these sonnets. Steevens called attention to the lack of evidence, and referred to the "charge of jealousy" as an unwarrantable conjecture. Malone, on the other hand, while questioning the evidence upon which Oldys founded his opinions, suggested that both jealousy and the likelihood that the actor was not very strongly attached to his wife, were indicated by the fact that jealousy was "the principal hinge of four of his plays" by the D'Avenant scandal, and by the bequest of the "second-best bed" as interlined in Shakespere's last Will & Testament.

More fables were flying in by 1836 with the discovery of the marriage bond. It brought to light the interval between the issue of the bond and the baptism of the eldest child Susanna,

⁵²² Sir William D'Avenant, Lives of Eminent Men, Vol. II. 302, 303.

⁵²³ Athenae Oxoniensis (London: J. Parker. Oxford 1817), Vol. III. 802.

⁵²⁴ Chapter XX. xxi.

⁵²⁵ Gerard Langbaine, Account of the English Dramatic Poets (Oxford: 1691).

as previously mentioned; furthermore, on regards of the absence of John Shakespere's name as a surety or as a consenting party to the marriage.

Among the more detailed writers who have expressed opinions unfavourable regarding the alleged marriage, was Thomas Moore, in his 1860 *Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron*; Thomas De Quincey, in his *Shakespeare, A Biography* (pp. 43-93); Thomas Campbell, in his 1859 *Dramatic Works*; Richard White, in his *Memoirs of the Life of William Shakespeare* (pp. 48-53); Lord Campbell, in his *Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements Considered* (p. 107); and finally, Karl Elze in his *Shakespeare, A Literary Biography*.

But who could this other Anne have been? Nothing is known of her, except from what comes in Lee's biography:

No marriage registers of the period are extant at Temple Grafton to inform us whether Anne Whateley actually married her Shakespere or who precisely the parties were. A Whateley family resided in Stratford, but there is nothing to show that Anne of Temple Grafton was connected with it. The chief argument against the conclusion that the marriage license and the marriage bond concerned different couples lies in the apparent improbability that two persons, both named Shakespere, should on two successive days not only be arranging with the Bishop of Worcester's official to marry, but should be involving themselves, whether on their own initiative or on that of their friends, in more elaborate and expensive forms of procedure than were habitual to the humbler ranks of contemporary society. But the Worcester diocese covered a very wide area, and was honeycombed with Shakespere families of all degrees of gentility. The Shakespere whom Anne Whateley was licensed to marry may have been of a superior station, to which marriage by license was deemed appropriate. On the unwarranted assumption of the identity of the Shakespere of the marriage bond with the Shakespere of the marriage license, a romantic theory has been based to the effect that 'Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton,' believing herself to have a just claim to the poet's hand, secured the license on hearing of the proposed action of Anne Hathaway's friends, and hoped, by moving in the matter a day before the Shottery husbandmen, to insure Shakespere's fidelity to his alleged pledges.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁶ Life of William Shakespeare (New York: MacMillan Co., 1909), 25.

APPENDIX B

1574

- *Jesu Christi.* By Theodoro Beza.
- *A Brief Introduction to Music.* Collected by P. Delamote, (or De La Motte) a Frenchman. (Octavo)
- *Liber precum publicarum.* By the assigns of Francis Flower. Reprinted several times.
- *Propheticae et apostolicae.* This piece had the approbation of Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury.

1575

- *Discantus cantiones.* This piece has a remarkable dedication to the Queen, and their patent at the end.
- *The New Testament, with diversities of reading, and profitable annotations.* Printed for Charles Barker.

1576

- *The life of the most godly, valiant, and noble captain, and maintainer of the true Christian religion in France, Jesper Colignie Shatilion, sometime great Admiral of France.* Translated by A. Golding.
- *Institutio Christianae Religionis.* By Joanne Caluino.
- *Commentarius.* By Nicolao Hemmingo.
- *A warning to take heed of Fowler's Psalter.* By Thomas Sampson. Printed for G. Bishop.

1577

- *Psalmi graduum.* By M. Luther. Translated into English by Henry Bull.
- *Commentarius.* By Nicolao Hemmingo. Printed for G. Bishop.
- *In D. Pauli ad Romanos epistolam Exegema.* By Andrea Hyperio.
- *A Sovereign Salve for a Sinful Soul.* By Nathaniel Baxter, Minister.⁵²⁷
- *Plutarch's Lives.* By Thomas Vautrollier and Master Wright.⁵²⁸

1578

- *Special and Chosen Sermons of D. Martin Luther.* Translated into English by W. G.
- *An Italian Grammar from Scipio Lentulo.* Translated into English by Henry Grantham.

1579

- *The History of Guicciardin.* Translated into English by Geffray Fenton.
- *Novum Testamentum.* Author unknown.
- *Orations of Cicero.* Author unknown.
- *De Rep. Anglorum.* By Thomas Chalonere.
- *Psalms.* Dedicated to Trinity College, Cambridge.

⁵²⁷ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted in Mrs. Stopes' The Seventeenth Century Accounts of the Masters of the Revels (London: The Shakespeare Association, 1922).

⁵²⁸ Ibid.,

1580

- *David's Psalm.* Author unknown.
- *Novum Testamentum.* Author unknown.
- Luther in English on the Galathians.
- *A retentive to stay good Christians in true faith and religion, against the motives of Richard Bristow.* By William Fulke.

1581

- *Positions, wherein those primitive circumstances be examined, which 1581 are necessary for the training up of children, either for skill in their book, or health in their body.* By Richard Mulcaster.
- *A most easy perfect & absolute way to learn the French Tongue.* Author Unknown.⁵²⁹

1582

- *The first part of the elementary, which entreateth chiefly of the right 1582 writing of our English tongue.* By Richard Mulcaster.
- Ovid's *Metamorphosis.* By Andrea Naugerio.
- *An Astrological Catechism.* By Leowitz, translated by Turner.⁵³⁰

1583

- *An answer to a supplicate epistle of G. T. for the pretended Catholics.* By Walter Travers.
- *Psalms.* By Walter Travers.
- *Campo di Fior.* Author unknown.

1584

- *Jesu Christi.* By Theodoro Beza.
- *Novum Testamentum.* By Theodoro Beza.
- *The epistle dedicatory to Sir Phillip Sidney.*⁵³¹
- *The Dialectics of Aristotle.* Edited by John Case of Oxford.⁵³²
- *The Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesie.* By the King. Edinburgh.⁵³³

1585

- *Giordano Bruno Nolano.* By Antonio Baio.
- *Albercei gentilis de legationibus libri tres.* Dedicated to Sir Phillip Sidney.
- *The Common Prayer in Latin.* By Francis Flower.
- Morgan's *Phoenix Britannicus,* Edinburgh. Printed the same year in English for Thomas Nelson. (See Harl. MS. VII. 4-9)⁵³⁴

1586

- *A Treatise of Melancholic.* By Timothy Bright.

1587

⁵²⁹ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.,

⁵³¹ "This," Mr. Baker says, "is that little atheistical book, lately sold at Charles Bernard's sale, for £28 to Walter Clavel, Esq., and is now in the Bodleian library, that of James West Esq., and in my own study."

⁵³² Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵³³ Ibid.,

⁵³⁴ Ibid.,

- *Jesu Christi*. By Theodoro Beza.
- Cicero's *Orations*. By J. Harison.
- *The Treasons of the Scottish Queen*. Sir William Herberete.⁵³⁵

1588

- *Certain advertisements out of Ireland*.
- *The copy of a letter sent out of England to Don Bernardin Mendoza, Ambassador in France for the King of Spain*. Printed for Richard Field.
- *Metpomaxia*. By Guilielmo Fulcone. Dedicated to Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester.

⁵³⁵ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

APPENDIX C

1589

- *The Arte of English Poesie.* “Supposed author of this book is Webster Puttenham.”⁵³⁶
- *The Restorer of the French Estate.* Translated from French. Author Unknown.
- *An Apology for the General Cause of the Reformation.* Author Unknown.
- *A true Discourse of Sir Francis Drake’s West Indian Voyage.* Author Unknown.

1590

- *A Sovereign Salve for a Sinful Soul.* Author not entered.
- Digge’s *Stratioticos.* [Soldier.]
- *The Method of Physique.* By Philip Barrouge.⁵³⁷

1591⁵³⁸

- *Orlando’s Furioso.* Author not entered.

1592

- *The French Alphabet, together with the treasure of the French tongue.* Author not entered.⁵³⁹
- *Proverbs of Soloman.* For Dexter.
- David’s *Psalms.* By Georgii Buchanani.
- *Arithmetic.* By Thomas Masterson.

1593

- *Analytical Tables.* By Stephano Szegedino Pannonio.
- *A Caveat for Sureties.* By W. Burton. For Toby Cooke.
- *Jesu Christi.* By Theodoro Beza.
- *Venus and Adonis.* By William Shakespeare. (It is curious this edition is not listed in the Registered Charts of Printers.)
- *Description of all the principallest Minerals & their Properties.* Author not entered.⁵⁴⁰

1594

- *Jesu Christi.* By Theodoro Beza.
- *Politics or Civil Doctrine.* Translated into English by William Jones.
- *Logical Analysis.* By M. Johan.
- *Daphnis Amaryllis.* By David Hume of Godscroft.⁵⁴¹
- *Venus and Adonis.* By William Shakespeare. Assigned over to Harrison.⁵⁴²
- *Observations on the Art of English Poesie.* By Thomas Campion.⁵⁴³

1595⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁶ Registered Charts of Printers.

⁵³⁷ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵³⁸ This year is not found recorded in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵³⁹ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵⁴⁰ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.,

⁵⁴² Ibid.,

⁵⁴³ Ibid. Thomas Campion flourished as a poet and physician during part of the Reigns of Elizabeth and James. He was educated at Cambridge, but of his family and life no particulars can be traced.

- Tullie's *Orations*. Author not entered.

1596

- *Daniel his Chalde Visions, and his Hebrew*. By Hugh Boughton.
- *Orationum Marci Tul*. By Bruto.
- *Jesu Christo*. Printed for Richard Field.
- *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*. Translated into English by H. Holland with R. Dexter.
- *The Elements of Arithmetic*. Translated into English from the Latin by Thomas Hood.
- *Metamorphosis of Ajax*. By John Harington.⁵⁴⁵

1597

- *The French Littleton*. By Claudius Holyband.
- *A Brief Discourse of Certain Points of Religion*. By George Gifforde.

1598

- *Synonymorum Sylva*. Author not entered.
- *Book of Witches*. By Tobie Cooke.⁵⁴⁶

1599

- *Sermons*. By George Gifforde.
- *The History of Guicciardin*. By Geffray Fenton.
- The Sacred Shield of all Christian Soldiers. By R. Dexter.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ This year is not found recorded in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵⁴⁵ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.,

⁵⁴⁷ Not found in the Registered Charts of Printers, but noted by Mrs. Stopes.

APPENDIX E

- 1546: William Dalam (not Dalum, as Dugdale has it). Benjamin Beddome was Master of the school also; the year is unknown, though likely after Dalam.⁵⁴⁸
- 1553: Mr. Roger Dyos. Appointed Vicar by Queen Mary.
- 1554: William Smart. Schoolmaster.
- 1560: Mr. John Bretchgirdle. Appointed Vicar by Elizabeth I on February 27.
- 1563: William Allen. Schoolmaster.
- 1565: John Brownsworde. Schoolmaster.
- 1568: John Acton. Schoolmaster.
- 1569: Henry Heicraft. Appointed Vicar on January 1.
- 1570: Walter Roche. Schoolmaster.
- 1572: Thomas (or Simon) Hunt. Schoolmaster. (One of Shakespere's teachers?)
- 1577: Thomas Jenkins. Schoolmaster. (One of Shakespere's teachers?)
- 1580: John Cotton. Schoolmaster.
- 1583: Alexander Aspinall. Schoolmaster.
- 1584: Richard Barton. Appointed Vicar on February 17, by the Earl of Warwick.
- 1589: John Bramhall. Appointed Vicar on November 20.
- 1596: Richard Byfield. Appointed Vicar on January 23, by Mr. Edward Greville on the decease of John Bramhall.
- 1608?: Mr. John Rogers. Appointed Vicar.
- 1612: Edward Brooke (or Willimore). Appointed Assistant Minister on April 29.
- 1614: Mr. Watts. Schoolmaster.
- 1617: Thomas Wilson (preacher of Evesham). Appointed Vicar on May 5.
- 1624: John Trapp. Schoolmaster.
- 1640: Henry Twitchet. Appointed Vicar by Charles I.
- 1648: Alexander Beane. Appointed Vicar by Cromwell.
- 1662: John Ward. Appointed Vicar by Charles II.
- 1669: John Johnson. Schoolmaster.
- 1689: Thomas Willes. Schoolmaster.
- 1716: Gabriel Barrodale. Schoolmaster.
- 1735: Joseph Greene. Schoolmaster.
- 1772: David Davenport. Schoolmaster.
- 1774: James Davenport. Schoolmaster.
- 1792: John Whitmore. Schoolmaster.

⁵⁴⁸ Richard Savage and Edgar I. Fripp, *Minutes & Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-Upon-Avon & other Records 1553–1620* (Oxford: Dugdale Society, 1921), Vol. I.

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